



# BRITAIN AND THE BEAST

EDITED BY CLOUGH WILLIAMS-ELLIS



# BRITAIN AND THE BEAST

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FORD · G. M. TREVELYAN · JOHN GLOAG  
SIR WILLIAM BEACH THOMAS · S. P. B.  
MAIS · R. M. LOCKLEY · KENNETH SPENCE  
EDMUND VALE · GEORGE SCOTT-  
MONCRIEFF · LORD HOWARD OF  
PENRITH · AILEEN TATTON BROWN

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## POINT

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# *Messages*

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## ON THE PUBLICATION OF THIS BOOK

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From the Rt. Hon. DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

A task of supreme importance for our times is the awakening of the nation to the treasures of our neglected countryside, and the devising of means to make its store of potential health and enjoyment available for all. In this symposium Mr. Clough Williams-Ellis has gathered together a wealth of brilliant and challenging articles from more than a score of pens, differing in their judgment on many issues, but united in their desire that the real heritage of our land shall be saved from neglect and from corruption, and made to serve the highest interests of the people. I am wholeheartedly with them in that purpose. The right linking of town and country is a vital department of social policy. To stimulate and inform public opinion about it is a valuable service. To render such a service is the central object of these essays.

From the Rt. Hon. SIR KINGSLEY WOOD, *Minister  
Health*

Mr. Clough Williams-Ellis is a doughty champion of the Beauty of Rural England against the Beast of unseemly urban development, and his efforts in her defence must command the respect of all of us. There need not often be opposition between the claims of rural health and those of rural beauty, and as Minister of Health it has been my constant concern to endeavour to further the one without unnecessarily harming the other.

From the Rt. Hon. GEORGE LANSBURY

This book should have a great circulation. Every sane person will encourage every effort to preserve the loveliness and beauty which still remain of our glorious countryside.

Mankind will just rush to perdition unless means can be found for the development, in our times, of the enjoyment of Rest and Peace, amid the everlasting beauty which Nature gives us.

From LORD BADEN-POWELL

I must congratulate you on this excellent book. When I become Minister of Education I shall make *Britain and the Beast* a textbook for use at all Teachers' Training Colleges. Also I shall cut down the long unhealthy hours of schoolroom work for the children, and shall devote part of their time to outdoor education, showing them something of the beauties and wonders of Nature and of their surroundings. Even in the squalor of the slum street the blue sky can be seen overhead by those who can look up; even a wet tarmiac road can show a peacock blue to eyes that have been opened to see. But, *per contra*, they shall also see how man defiles these natural beauties with noise and speed, with tawdry erections, and with litter left lying about—rubbish which is objectionable whether from an æsthetic, moral, or sanitary point of view.

Landing in England from, say, Sweden or Germany, where litter louts don't exist, one gets hit in the face by the untidiness and squalor in England. No one can take a pride in a dirty country, however beautiful its scenery or romantic its past. Yet pride in one's country is the foundation of patriotism. Our remedy here lies in the hands of our oncoming generation, both of rich and poor—when educated *ad hoc*.

From the Rt. Hon. the MARQUESS OF ZETLAND: *Secretary of State for India, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Trust.*

I write to say how warmly I welcome the publication of a volume which brings to the notice of the public the vital importance of taking steps while there is still time to preserve the English countryside. There has undoubtedly been a stirring of the public conscience on this matter in recent times, and the publication of the volume at this juncture is, therefore, all the more appropriate. On behalf of the National Trust, which may claim to be a pioneer in the movement, I venture to offer both my congratulations and my thanks.

From the Rt. Hon. the EARL OF CRAWFORD AND BALCARRES, *President of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England.*

Five-and-twenty authors are here assembled—I doubt not that on most topics of current affairs and intercourse they differ fundamentally, and yet these representative people unite in acclaiming something to be beautiful. They agree therefore upon what is always a highly controversial issue. How potent must be the charm of our native landscape, with all its mysterious gestures and hidden impulses: how great must be the agency which commands such a measure of acquiescence and enthusiasm. Nor are the principles underlying the thesis and argument of the volume unacceptable to the public at large. The distinction of our countryside is acknowledged, its disfigurement is an admitted disgrace, and yet this brutal and senseless vulgarization proceeds apace. Notwithstanding all our efforts, little progress seems attainable. One is filled with despair.

But is not the public beginning to feel shame for its tolerance of to-day's misdeeds? I believe we are much less impotent than we appear, or rather that public sentiment, which is conscious of the outrage, is becoming anxious to assert its power. Let us hope so. But we must not rely upon our activity as propagandists, and the advent of greater respect for Rural England requires a more vigorous type of advocacy. If a thousand readers of this book would submit themselves for election to public bodies, from the Parish Council onwards, the impact would be notable and progress would quickly ensue. Is not the effort worth while—a thousand times over?

From the Rt. Hon. the EARL OF DERBY

I have not forgotten our talk at the first founding of the Travel Association, and if that talk in any way inspired you to edit the delightful book which you have been good enough to send me, I am indeed proud. You say that the book is 'edited by yourself for the cause you most care for,' and, if I may say so, it is a corollary to the cause I most care for, and that is the bringing of foreign visitors to this country.

From SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS

We cannot go back, we do not want to go back, to the conditions of feudalism, but we must somehow wrest our beauty

of the country from the grip of the Beast of industrialism, with all its foul habits of spoliation. We must build again the community life of our villages, I believe, through some method of English collectivization worked out in our own country by our own native ingenuity.

This book is of the greatest value. It gives the evidence and poses the questions for the judgment of the people—the common people whose heritage it is. I wish it were possible to distribute it amongst those people. They are instinct with a true appreciation, though it is so often covered over with the beastliness of our modern mechanized civilization—beastliness which need never exist. In the meantime I am grateful for what you have done to open the eyes of those who read.

From Professor JULIAN HUXLEY, *Secretary of the Zoological Society of London.*

Such a book is well worth producing since we shall never get anything adequate done about preservation or planning in this country without strong support from public opinion. The great thing, it seems to me, is to press for central control and co-ordination, and that is one of the keynotes of the book. The photographs are wonderful, and help to make the book a thing of permanent value.

From J. B. PRIESTLEY

These last few years I have been compelled to spend a good deal of time a long way from England. I have never returned home without marvelling at the fundamental beauty of our island or at the horrible things we are doing to that beauty. Unless we realize at once what is happening and make up our minds to put an end to these horrors, beautiful England will soon be no more than a ghost haunting libraries and art galleries. This book has the right challenging note, and even people who merely peep at the pictures ought to be won over. I hope it has a gigantic sale.

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## Editor's Introduction

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### A PREFACE AND A POSTSCRIPT

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If you think that this book needs justifying, I would say—look around you. It has come into being because some twenty English men and women who are acute observers have so looked, and not merely looked but seen and, further, grasped the implications of what they saw. Though most of them here write of some particular part or aspect of our countryside, and from a special angle, they are all vividly aware of England as a whole, as a complex, variegated, ever-changing background to some forty million individual lives. That countryside and those lives for ever act and react on one another, both profoundly and visibly. Perpetual change there needs must be, and it is chiefly their concern at the quality of the present changes and reactions that has impelled this jury of writers to testify.

One might be tempted to think of them as a coroner's jury, conducting the inquest on a mutilated corpse, were it not for the robust and stubborn faith of certain of them who see our present distresses and disfigurements as no more than the unpleasing symptoms of a passing epidemic—a perhaps unavoidable infantile malady inexorably set between the remote savagery we have left, and the fully adult civilization we are presumably bound for.

All of them, however, have, I suspect, at some time or another felt like Evelyn Waugh's Nina in *Vile Bodies* when Ginger ironically quotes:

“‘This sceptred isle, this earth of majesty, this something or other Eden . . . this blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England. . . .’”

‘Nina looked down and saw inclined at an odd angle an

horizon of straggling red suburb, arterial roads dotted with little cars, factories, some of them working, others empty and decaying, a disused canal, some distant hills sown with bungalows, wireless masts, and overhead power cables.

"‘I think I am going to be sick,’ said Nina.”

Probably it is necessary for every one of us to experience some such feeling of nausea before we can also feel sufficiently moved to do anything about removing its causes, and though the empanelled jury is charged, in so far as it is able, to deliver a verdict (however little unanimous) on which some just judgment can be formed and action taken, it was also instructed not to blink or slur over what should properly shock and disturb a too complacent public.

Only by a general realization of the true trend of things can that sound public opinion be formed without which, in a democracy at any rate, reform is unlikely if not impossible.

Now whether or not the contributors to this symposium be considered as jury or as witnesses, the mere editor is assuredly not the judge. Therefore no summing-up will be attempted, though there are a few observations that might usefully be made.

There are of course a number of assertions, claims, or proposals that are common to several, sometimes to many, of the writers, but again there are conflicts of evidence, or perhaps more truly divergences of view, that would make any sort of Majority Report unhelpfully meagre.

Yet all are agreed that we are in a discreditable and rather daunting mess, the visible evidence of which they severally adduce, whilst according to their individual experience and bias they outline the causes of our present distresses remote or proximate, and make their proposals for reform both general and particular.

All display their characteristic reactions to the indignity and discomfort of living in a land where disorder, ugliness, and inefficiency are generally accepted and tolerated both officially and privately as a matter of course. None of them

is cheerful. As to remedies, the single major change that receives by far the greatest backing is the establishment of some form of 'Ministry of Amenities,' a new Government department charged with the duty not only of holding a watching brief for our visual background in general, but also of restraining and advising the other Departments of State in this regard somewhat as the Treasury now controls their activities in respect of cost in money.

Cost in amenity should, they aver, be no less narrowly watched.

As it is, being nobody's particular business, it is always amenity that has to give way whenever a civilized regard for seemliness would seem to threaten a little more trouble or a little more cost to the other national interests, be they transport or trade, the fighting services or whatever. True, in Parliament there is now apparent a certain lip-service to beauty, but as all parties seem equally ready to be thus easily and distantly polite about it, there are as yet no votes involved, and therefore no real seriousness. There can, it seems, be *no* effective action until this matter becomes, like football pools and dog racing, a 'live political issue.'

The nationalization of the land (particularly of urban land) is held by some to be a pre-requisite for any effective control of its use, though the poor showing of our present administration, both central and local, regarding amenities, seems to suggest that any such reform should be preceded by some intensive and very necessary education. That we are individually too irresponsible for private ownership gives one small immediate hopes of less discreditable results from communal management.

There is a notable unanimity as to the immediate need for the establishment of really adequate national parks before it becomes too late to achieve even that much salvage from the general wreck.

Also, the National Trust is very generally saluted, though it appears to some in the doleful guise of England's executor, the pious curator of rare little remnants of loveliness, ticketed

specimens of what we have already largely lost or wantonly thrown away.

Nearly every contributor also commends the valiant labours of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, a recognition that is most well-deserved, but the blessings of the just cannot alone give it the power it needs increasingly and which indeed can only come from a more general support by its direct beneficiaries—the whole people of England.

That our numbers will soon be dwindling rapidly, owing to the falling birth-rate, does not—surprisingly enough—appear to have much affected the outlook of any one.

One writer seems to wonder a little wistfully whether a period of dictatorship might not brace us up into a less supine and fatalistic attitude towards the destruction of irreplaceable amenities, whilst Lord Howard of Penrith shows us how wisely certain aspects of the matter are dealt with in other countries—both totalitarian and democratic—and unfavourably contrasts their careful education of the young in responsible citizenship with our own calamitous neglect.

Another, perhaps the most philosophically minded and least sanguine of the whole group, sees little hope of a reasonable and generally tolerable future save through Communism—which, however, he admits would ill suit his own traditionally liberal outlook.

Most reluctantly I had to agree to the deletion of this valiant declaration on the grounds that the arguments involved carried both writer and reader far beyond the immediate subject of the present book and into realms of high policy, international economics, and issues of war and peace more properly belonging to a less detailed and therefore less restricted survey of our distresses.

The trouble is indeed deep-seated, far-gone, and seemingly ineradicable save by some major operation of statecraft that may require the sort of fortitude only to be asked of those whose sole alternative to undergoing a severe disciplining in the present is a dolorous future to which their children will be the resentful heirs.

Such fortitude is now definitely asked for, as we are tardily discovering that to go as you please is not necessarily to arrive at what is pleasant, though we have yet to realize that wisdom has its price as well as folly.

Part of the price for a saner and more ordered England must be paid for in liberty—not omitting that most cherished private right to do public wrong.

If we, who might, do not choose both to make and to impose those sacrifices that are inexorably demanded in payment for a more civilized England where there shall be less cause for shame and more for general satisfaction, then a condition that is already critical must pass into one that is desperate. That would mean an end to much, if not most, of what makes the more fortunate of us still find life worth living.

I am well aware of a defeatist attitude in certain quarters where it is argued that it is really rather futile to bother oneself about cleanliness and order just now when our whole civilization, such as it is, is so obviously precarious and liable to be blown to pieces any day by an all-destroying war.

As an excuse for letting ill alone such an argument is only valid if our obliteration is both near and certain, whilst even if it were, there are still some of us with a little pride who would sooner be seen dead in Bath than in Bognor Regis.

Maybe this book, a report and a reconnaissance, will provoke others (perhaps a group of realist philosophers who see the vital import of our physical background in terms of human well-being as do we who have written it) to produce the sort of politico-aesthetic-economic treatise that can move governments to action. Their data are here. Their case should be overwhelming. Vigorous political and educative activity on a national scale could be the only apt response.

If such action does not in fact result, either directly or indirectly, our book will have failed of its purpose. We shall see the lights put out to the sound of our reveille: our already belated call to battle will have become an epitaph and a dirge.

## *Note*

SINCE the body of this book was printed the National Trust has formulated a scheme for the preservation of Historic Country Houses on somewhat different lines to those described in the chapter on 'Parks—National and Private.' Those interested in proposals for the quasi-nationalization of such places are referred to the Trust's own publications for further information.

## *Acknowledgments*

THANKS are due and are tendered to the editors of *The Listener*, *Time and Tide*, *Country Life*, *The Liverpool Quarterly*, *The Spectator*, and *The Architect's Journal* for their kind permission to print material that first appeared in their columns. Thanks are also tendered to the Oxford University Press, and the poet's family, for kind permission to quote from the poem, *Binsey Poplars*, by Gerard Manley Hopkins.



O if we but knew what we do  
When we delve or hew—  
Hack and rack the growing green!  
Since country is so tender  
To touch, her being so slender,  
That, like this sleek and seeing ball  
But a prick will make no eye at all,  
Where we, even where we mean  
To mend her we end her,  
When we hew or delve:  
After-comers cannot guess the beauty been.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS.

# *Art and the State*

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J. M. KEYNES

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THE ancient world knew that the public needed circuses as well as bread. And, policy apart, its rulers for their own glory and satisfaction expended an important proportion of the national wealth on ceremony, works of art, and magnificent buildings. These policies, habits, and traditions were not confined to the Greek and Roman world. They began as early as man working with his bare hands has left records behind him, and they continued in changing forms and with various purposes, from Stonehenge to Salisbury Cathedral, down at least to the age of Sir Christopher Wren, Louis XIV, and Peter the Great. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the rich nobility continued in a private, self-regarding, and attenuated manner what had been the office of the monarch and the State, with the Church somewhat in eclipse. But there commenced in the eighteenth century and reached a climax in the nineteenth a new view of the functions of the State and of society, which still governs us to-day.

This view was the utilitarian and economic—one might almost say financial—ideal, as the sole, respectable purpose of the community as a whole; the most dreadful heresy, perhaps, which has ever gained the ear of a civilized people. Bread and nothing but bread, and not even bread, and bread accumulating at compound interest until it has turned into a stone. Poets and artists have lifted occasional weak voices against the heresy. I fancy that the Prince Consort was the last protester to be found in high places. But the Treasury view has prevailed. Not only in practice. The theory is equally powerful. We have persuaded ourselves that it is

positively wicked for the State to spend a halfpenny on non-economic purposes. Even education and public health only creep in under an economic alias on the ground that they 'pay.' We still apply some frantic perversion of business arithmetic in order to settle the problem whether it pays better to pour milk down the drains or to feed it to school children. One form alone of uncalculated expenditure survives from the heroic age—war. And even that must sometimes pretend to be economic. If there arises some occasion of non-economic expenditure which it would be a manifest public scandal to forgo, it is thought suitable to hand round the hat to solicit the charity of private persons.

This expedient is sometimes applied in cases which would be incredible if we were not so well accustomed to them. An outstanding example is to be found where the preservation of the countryside from exploitation is required for reasons of health, recreation, amenity, or natural beauty. This is a particularly good example of the way in which we are haggard by a perverted theory of the State, not only because no expenditure of the national resources is involved but, at the most, only a transfer from one pocket into another, but because there is perhaps no current matter about the importance and urgency of which there is such national unanimity in every quarter. When a stretch of cliff, a reach of the Thames, a slope of down is scheduled for destruction, it does not occur to the Prime Minister that the obvious remedy is for the State to prohibit the outrage and pay just compensation, if any; that would be uneconomic. There may be no man who minds the outrage more than he. But he is the thrall of the sub-human denizens of the Treasury. There is nothing for it but a letter to *The Times* and to hand round the hat. He even helps to administer a private charity fund, nobly provided by a foreigner, to make such donations as may be required from time to time to prevent such things as Shakespeare's Cliff from being converted into cement. So low have we fallen to-day in our conception of the duty and purpose, the honour and glory of the State.

We regard the preservation of the national monuments bequeathed to us from earlier times as properly dependent on precarious and insufficient donations from individuals more public-spirited than the community itself. Since Lincoln Cathedral, crowning the height which has been for two thousand years one of the capital centres of England, can collapse to the ground before the Treasury will regard so uneconomic a purpose as deserving of public money, it is no matter for wonder that the high authorities build no more hanging gardens of Babylon, no more Pyramids, Parthenons, Colossus, cathedrals, palaces, not even opera houses, theatres, colonnades, boulevards, and public places. Our grandest exercises to-day in the arts of public construction are the arterial roads, which, however, creep into existence under a cloak of economic necessity and by the accident that a special tax earmarked for them brings in returns of unexpected size, not all of which can be decently diverted to other purposes.

Even more important than the permanent monuments of dignity and beauty in which each generation should express its spirit to stand for it in the procession of time are the ephemeral ceremonies, shows, and entertainments in which the common man can take his delight and recreation after his work is done, and which can make him feel, as nothing else can, that he is one with, and part of, a community, finer, more gifted, more splendid, more carefree than he can be by himself. Our experience has demonstrated plainly that these things cannot be successfully carried on if they depend on the motive of profit and financial success. The exploitation and incidental destruction of the divine gift of the public entertainer by prostituting it to the purposes of financial gain is one of the worse crimes of present-day capitalism. How the State could best play its proper part it is hard to say. We must learn by trial and error. But anything would be better than the present system. The position to-day of artists of all sorts is disastrous. The attitude of an artist to his work renders him exceptionally unsuited for financial contacts. His state of mind is just the opposite of that of a man the main purpose of

whose work is his livelihood. The artist alternates between economic imprudence, when any association between his work and money is repugnant, and an excessive greediness, when no reward seems adequate to what is without price. He needs economic security and enough income, and then to be left to himself, at the same time the servant of the public and his own master. He is not easy to help. For he needs a responsive spirit of the age, which we cannot deliberately invoke. We can help him best, perhaps, by promoting an atmosphere of open-handedness, of liberality, of candour, of toleration, of experiment, of optimism, which expects to find some things good. It is our sitting tight-buttoned in the present, with no hope or belief in the future, which weighs him down.

But before we need consider what active part the State should play, we can at least abolish the positive impediments which, as some odd relic of Puritanism, we still impose on the business of public entertainment. Of the institutions which have grown up since the War, we should most of us agree, I think—in spite of all our bickering—that the B.B.C. is our greatest and most successful. But even the B.B.C. must be furtive in its progress. And, incredible to relate, instead of its receiving large subsidies from the State as one would expect, an important proportion of the ten shillings which the public contribute is withheld from it as a contribution to general taxes. This was a new and difficult business requiring large-scale, costly experiments, capable of revolutionizing the relation of the State to the arts of public entertainment, contributing more both to the recreation and to the education of the general public than all other mediums put together. Yet, even in its earliest and most precarious days, we considered it a proper object of taxation. On such dry husks are Chancellors of the Exchequer nourished; though probably these burdens were imposed in the spirit of fairness that requires equal injury all round. For the taxation of the B.B.C. is only the extreme example of the general principle that we penalize music, opera, all the arts of the theatre with a heavy, indeed a crushing, tax.

Architecture is the most public of the arts, the least private in its manifestations, and the best suited to give form and body to civic pride and the sense of social unity. Music comes next; then the various arts of the theatre; then the plastic and pictorial crafts—except in some aspects of sculpture and decoration where they should be the adjutants of architecture; with poetry and literature, by their nature more private and personal. While it is difficult for the State expressly to encourage the private and personal arts, fortunately they need it less, since they do not require the framework, the scale, or the expense which only the organized community is able to furnish. But there remains an activity which is necessarily public and for that reason has fallen, in accordance with the aforesaid doctrine, into an almost complete desuetude—namely, public shows and ceremonies. There are a few which we have inherited and maintain, often in an antiquarian spirit, as quaint curiosities. There are none which we have invented as expressive of ourselves. Not only are these things regarded as the occasion of avoidable and, therefore, unjustifiable expense, but the satisfaction people find in them is considered barbaric or, at the best, childish, and unworthy of serious citizens.

This view of public shows and ceremonies is particularly characteristic of the western democracies, the United States, France, ourselves and our Dominions. I suggest that it is proving a weakness not to be ignored. Are there any of us who are free from strong emotion when an occasion arises for all the people dwelling in one place to join together in a celebration, an expression of common feeling, even the mere sharing in common of a simple pleasure? Are we convinced that this emotion is barbaric, childish, or bad? I see no reason to suppose so. At any rate, the provision of proper opportunities for the satisfaction of this almost universal human need should rank high in the arts of government; and a system of society which unduly neglects them may prove to have done so to its peril. King George V's jubilee, originally planned by the authorities on a very modest scale, provided

an extraordinary example of the craving of a public, long deprived of shows and ceremonies, especially outside London, for an opportunity to collect in great concourses and to feel together. These mass emotions can be exceedingly dangerous, none more so; but this is a reason why they should be rightly guided and satisfied, not for ignoring them. This side of public life is one which we have so long neglected that we should scarcely know how to set about reviving it in a contemporary spirit, significant and satisfactory to this generation. Our present policies are a just reflection of a certain political philosophy. I suggest that this philosophy is profoundly mistaken and that it may even, in the long run, undermine the solidity of our institutions. We shall only change our policies if we change the philosophy underlying them. I have indicated an alternative point of view. Let me conclude with two illustrations, as examples of what might follow from a change of mind—one for the preservation of what we have inherited, the other for the enlargement of what we shall transmit.

1. There should be established a Commission of Public Places with power to issue an injunction against any act of exploitation or development of land or any change or demolition of an existing building where it considered such act to be contrary to the general interest, with power to grant compensation to the extent that was fair in the circumstances, but not as of right. Similarly where the repair or maintenance or acquisition of a place or building was in the general interest, the Commission should have power to meet any part of the expense.

2. Initial preparation should be made, so that some plans will be ready and available to ward off the next slump, for the embellishment and comprehensive rebuilding at the public cost of the unplanned, insalutary and disfiguring quarters of our principal cities. Taking London as our example, we should demolish the majority of the existing buildings on the south bank of the river from the County Hall to Greenwich, and lay out these districts as the most magnificent, the most commodious and healthy working-class quarter in the world.

The space is at present so ill used that an equal or larger population could be housed in modern comfort on half the area or less, leaving the rest of it to be devoted to parks, squares, and playgrounds, with lakes, pleasure gardens, and boulevards, and every delight which skill and fancy can devise. Why should not all London be the equal of St. James's Park and its surroundings? The river front might become one of the sights of the world with a range of terraces and buildings rising from the river. The schools of South London should have the dignity of universities with courts, colonnades, and fountains, libraries, galleries, dining-halls, cinemas, and theatres for their own use. Into this scheme there should be introduced the utmost variety. All our architects and engineers and artists should have the opportunity to embody the various imagination, not of pceevish, stunted, and disillusioned beings, but of peaceful and satisfied spirits who belong to a renaissance.

I affirm that there can be no 'financial' obstacle to such achievements, provided that the labour and the material resources are available. It is the relative abundance of the latter which should determine the pace at which we decide to work. It is not in itself advisable to aim at speed. The best buildings are planned and erected slowly, subject to patient criticism and evolving under the architect's eye. We should move, in London and in our other cities, at the rate made possible by the state of employment in other directions. If this condition is observed, the scheme must necessarily enrich the country and translate into actual form our potentialities of social wealth.



# *Our Inheritance from the Past*

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It is unnecessary to set down what various forces and powerful interests have made of the traditional England of the villages, the townships, and the shires. The question is—how can this tatterdemalion England patch-up the windowed raggedness of her past so that she may still wear something of that rural dress which the smart new fashions set by progress are fast tearing off her back? The good will of Preservation Societies is plainly unable to recapitalize the bankruptcy of the countryside. They lack the means, nor is it right for rural England to live upon charity. Protection is not only a losing game but one which looks upon green England as an ornamental exhibit; a countryside cannot live as a museum of antiquities. Rehabilitation is the need, that the sluggish life-blood shall stir once more.

Since our present economic system is bleeding the moribund, would national revolution, by way whether of Communism or of some form of State Socialism, loose the paralysis that *lies upon the patient*? I doubt it, and for the good reason that such a convulsion or transition, should it occur, is bound to be urban and national. What does the nation or the city know about the countryside which they have robbed first of its solvency, its industries, its civilization, and its men, and, in latter days, of its beauty and tranquillity? Is Piccadilly, where the best country produce finds its home, to legislate for Little-Sopley-on-the-Wold which lives on canned goods from foreign parts? We live in an age when the city, having sucked the country dry, disgorges its surplus population upon the victim of its economic lust. Is the man in the motor

car, the new townsman in the old manor house, or the owner of the red-brick villa with deal boards nailed on to its gables to rescue it? Is a standardized and mechanized society, under whatever complexion of government and however well intentioned, to resurrect the life of which it knows nothing beyond glimpses of its more graphic outward spectacle? The reason why no national nor urban direction from without can resolve the bitter perplexity of how to salvage rather than to save our countryside is that the problem is ultimately local, a question of the relative and the particular, not of general rule or law. Locally considered, the diversity of rural England is such that generalization cannot be applied to it.

But experience has often chastened speculation and if the countryside appears doomed and the riddle of its recovery, human and natural, economic and aesthetic, seems insoluble, it is well to look back upon the days when it was in health. We shall have to look back a long way. If we look back a hundred years, it will be to view the Industrial Revolution whose fruits are our sour grapes completing the work of the enclosures. The new manufacturing towns were creeping over the northern countryside like a fungus over the leaves of a plant, and the thirst of steam and steel and other newborn giants of industrialism was accelerating the drainage of the countrymen off their land. If we jump backwards another hundred years, we are witness of the gathering momentum of the enclosures during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This hundred years' war between the landowner and the peasantry registered the grand climax of a process in sporadic operation since the Tudor monarchy, which made timid and half-hearted efforts to check it and to repopulate the countryside. But with the Georgian aristocracy of county families, who petitioned for more than 2,500 private Bills of Enclosure and, in R. H. Tawney's words, 'made the British Empire and ruined a considerable part of the English nation,' the powers of government were wholly identified. Parliament was 'a committee of land-owners,' and the voteless and evicted villager was neither

consulted in the appropriation of his glebe and demolition of his cottage, nor compensated for being suddenly transformed into an exile and a vagabond. The story of this first and greatest crime in the annals of modern progress has been impressively told by more than one historian; on the political side in the glowing pages of Gilbert Slater and the Hammonds, on the intimate and psychological plane in the great human document of George Bourne. I have no need here more than to mention in passing the social and economic results of that huge tidal wave of national prosperity and landslide of local welfare which crashed the old world and rang in the new. What there can be no doubt about at all is that the Enclosure Acts, both private and general, destroyed the English village as a living organism. As a shell, a relic with a feeble phosphorescence which aped the fire of life, the village survived and, where it is not now swallowed up by suburbs or bungalow plantations—the newest form of enclosure—still survives.

But its soul began to die two hundred years ago and a hundred years later it was dead. As is well known, the motives of enclosure were mixed. A man like Arthur Young, its ablest advocate, was not to be dominated by the greed of wealth such as actuated Selwyn's famous letter to Lord Carlisle: 'Bully (Lord Bolingbroke) has a scheme of enclosure which, if it succeeds, will free him from all his difficulties.' Arthur Young was able to put himself in the small holder's shoes. 'Parliament may be tender of property,' he imagined him saying in 1801, 'all I know is that I had a cow and an Act of Parliament has taken it from me.' Though a good many cultivated courtiers welcomed enclosure as manna from on high to settle their gaming debts and mend their fortunes, the real engine that set the steam-roller of national profit to grind over local well-being was economic progress. The development of commercial relations overseas; the rise of the textile industry; the race for markets; the spread of mass production; the application of new machinery to agriculture; the emergence of scientific farming; the growth of nationalism; the artificially high prices bolstered by the French War and

similar phenomena, all contributed—together with the genteel taste for parks and for a view of the landscape uninterrupted by anything so sordid as a cottage—to confounding the desperate efforts of Cobbett to save his land for the small holder. ‘When farmers become gentlemen,’ he wrote, ‘then labourers become slaves.’ They became worse than slaves, since Saxon theow and Norman serf were never paupers and beggars nor victims of economic insecurity and the Poor Law. The serf might be heavily fined by his lord, he might swink for him till he dropped, he might pay merchet and heriot, tallage and tithe. But he did not have his cottage pulled down over his head, nor was he committed to a pest-house for destitution, nor transported to Botany Bay because he exercised his immemorial right of taking a pheasant from the common waste to save his family from starvation. The savagery of the landed oligarchy both to its tenants and the yeoman-freeholders during this period of intensified enclosure may therefore be redeemed from the words of Somerset before he laid his head upon the block—‘the covetousness of the gentleman gave cause for the common people to rise’—and equally from those of Sir Thomas More that the Tudor enclosures reflected ‘a certain conspiracy of rich men procuring their own commodities under the name and title of a Common Wealth.’ The Acts that, ‘regardless of the honour of God or the welfare of England,’ depopulated the villages, degraded the villagers, and broke the village communities to pieces were merely the logical consequences of progress.

For every step that progress takes it exacts its price and few pause to ask whether the game is worth the loss. Certainly the stride forward of the latter eighteenth century was the most momentous in our history and the most consequential for the destinies of the unborn. The industrial revolution of the nineteenth century was as implicit in the enclosures as our own machine age was in the invention of the steam engine. It follows, then, that the present condition of agriculture (with its vast sweep of country laid down for grass and surrounded by choked ditches and gaping hedges, with its farms cultivated

and understaffed by raw boys and old men) is just as inevitable a result of the earlier enclosure policy of converting arable into pasture as the new forms of enclosure in suburban towns, in bungalow settlements, in new roads, and in the mechanization of the countryside are the effect of the modern spirit first articulated in the eighteenth century. Its philosophy as well as its economics became conscious in the bankrupting of the peasant and the private ownership of his fields. It is the same philosophy as that of the contemporary vested interests which defeat, except for fragments, the efforts of 'preservation.'

A new idea took command of ruling England and it went much further than depriving the peasant of his status as a shareholder in the land of his village and of reducing him to the lowest level as a propertyless wage-earner. It looked upon the land with a novel and calculating eye very different from the normal vision inbred among the countless generations of countrymen ever since the first mattock broke the virgin soil of England. Tawney has defined this revolutionary change as the aim of maximum output in contradistinction to that of maintaining a prosperous peasantry, which is exactly Goldsmith's epigram of 'Where wealth accumulates and men decay.' Gilbert Slater calls it the aim of maximum net profit as against the maximum gross produce of food. In other words, the attitude of men to one another as units of society was conceived as competitive and no longer as co-operative, as an individualistic scramble for wealth rather than as partnership in livelihood, as contending parts of a complex economic mechanism rather than as a network of social organisms, localized if not actually isolated from one another. It was the difference between the idea of subsistence and the idea of investment, between living on and gaining out of the land. That difference is the one that severs the modern from the ancient world.

It is not surprising that this new interpretation of the true object of existence shattered the timeless, the sanctified bond between man and the land he tilled. It is not too much to say,

therefore, that the conflict with implacable forces in which many Englishmen are now engaged to save their own country was nursed and launched by the enclosures of nearly two hundred years ago. The General Enclosure Act at the beginning of last century completed the triumph not only of the landlord over the peasant but of one type of civilization over another. Once more, it was the victory of Imperial Rome over the city-states of Greece.

I have been speaking hitherto less of the country than of its countrymen. Deliberately so, because the fortunes of the former are inseparably bound up with the social health or sickness of the latter. That, I venture to suggest, is a point of which many zealous preservationists are forgetful. The commercialization of the countryside has gone hand in hand with the degradation of their husbandmen, and its malady is incurable without the restoration of the men who in partnership and struggle with nature have made the land. Now in relief and a lightening of the spirit I am going to speak of the country and its men together, the story of whose union is one of the most inspiring themes upon which thought can dwell. But I have to travel in reverse a good deal further back than the time of Sir John Sinclair's 'The idea of having lands in common is derived from a barbarous state of society.' Between the first Act against enclosures in 1490 preceding the protest of *Utopia* in 1516, and the young manhood of big capitalized farming in the eighteenth century, two-fifths of the common land were enclosed and the 'commons of England' were slowly becoming 'the lower orders' who, in Cobbett's words had received 'an irrevocable sentence of poverty for life.' I have to look back to a period before the peasant had become spiritually destitute as well as economically ruined. After the dissolution of the monasteries had created a new landed class divorced from the land and void of local sympathies, he was in course of time forced to surrender the local environment by which he lived for equally compulsory relations with an external world which offered him a pittance for his labour in return for the loss of his land and common

rights, and for his home-raised produce shop-sold goods that had passed through the hands of a chain of middlemen. We pass across a bridgeless gulf from a competitive society where the master, as dependent on the market as his man, got all he could out of him for as little as he could give. We reach a time where eighty per cent of the inhabitants of a village would be under the sway of a De Vere or Montmorency in place of one in which Sir Thomas Overbury wrote of the yeoman: 'Though he be master, he says not to his servants, "go to field," but "let us go," and with his own eye doth both fatten his flock and set forward all manner of husbandry.' Overbury was plainly thinking of the open field system 'when masters made them merry with their men,' and not of the lands enclosed under the Tudors and Stuarts. Tudor arable converted into pasture to swell the export trade in wool caused Robert Kett's rebellion and the outraged folk-rhyme:

The towns go down, the land decays . . .  
Great men makyth nowadnys  
A sheep-cote in the Church:

Commons to close and kepe,  
Poor folk for bread cry and wepe,  
Towns pulled down to pasture sheep,  
This is the new guise.

The conversion of the common pasture into arable for speculators to make fortunes from the high price of corn in the Napolconic Wars caused the three peasant outbreaks culminating in the burnings of ricks and threshing machines in 1830. But there was a world of difference between the stout conservatism of the Tudor commoners downing tools and lustily demanding the return of their stolen lands and the despairing revulsion of the starved and homeless under Captain Swing. The village was insurgent in the sixteenth century; in 1381 it cried, 'We are men formed in Christ's likeness and we are kept like beasts.' In the nineteenth, it feebly twisted in its winding-sheet.

Curiosity, therefore, wants to know what kind of a rural

society it was from which has descended the forlorn, patient, deferential field-worker of to-day, that shadowy figure who himself promises to become a legend in an alien culture. Even in this vulgar age, is not the traditional Englishman of an older countryside still more alive than he? The men who knew thirteen hundred ways of telling you you were a fool, and from whom Shakespeare quarried a thousand nuggets of speech; the men whose seasonal rituals and junketings, whose feasts and fairs and folk-lore echo to this day in the nursery; the men who tanned their own leather, built their own ploughs and wagons, wove their own clothing from flax and flecce, brewed their own beer, baked their own bread, cured their own bacon, built and thatched and decorated their own homesteads with the art the moderns try to preserve in the old villages; practised the time-honoured crafts in their own parish; conducted their own government and made the very spoons and mugs from which they ate and drank so heartily—were these the ancestral stock of the slouching, Victorian nondescript who pulled his cap as Lady Bountiful rode by in her brougham? Why was Weyhill celebrated for its cheeses? Why were the villages at the knees and under the arm-pits of the downs built of chalk, flint, and 'clunch,' and those of the Cotswolds and Northamptonshire of that limestone that takes the winds and suns and frosts with beauty? Why do the architectural styles of our ancient villages vary according to their regional grouping, and how comes it that each one of them reflects the geological formation, the natural configuration, and even the vegetation of its particular locality? Why, in other words, are they inevitably beautiful by the only aesthetic law that matters, the law of fitness to environment? It is hard for us to understand these things who are so well equipped by mass-production that our red-brick villas equally scale the Pennines as edge the Saxon shore. It is hard for us who are governed by the lowest common multiple of uniformity in speech, in clothes, in food, in all things, to envisage the spirit of local particularity. But the answer to all these and similar questions is the village community which



was murdered by the grandfather of our own Machine Age—the enclosures.

The village community or 'champion,' to use Tusser's term, as opposed to 'several' (enclosed) farming, was a kind of self-supporting, economic pattern of arable, meadowland, and waste. The arable land was divided into three (or more or less) large fields, each of which was subdivided into long strips or 'shots' or furlongs, separated not by hedges but by baulks of green turf that on the slopes became lynchets. The furlong (furrow long) was that length of land which could be conveniently ploughed by an ox-team without pause, and our acre was the measure of a normal day's ploughing. Thirty acres made a virgate and four virgates a hide of land, but the ownership of the shots was parcelled off in such a way that the tenant's or owner's holdings were scattered over the fields and not joined together in a single bundle. It was the inconvenience of this arrangement that offered a handle to enclosure. But the method in this haphazard portioning was the religious effort of the village to secure that even the smallest holder, be he villein, borderer, or squatter, should have his share in the good land, and that the freeholders and socmen, or peasant squires who tilled their own land, should not by binding their strips together monopolize the richer land. Under the tribal which preceded the village or 'manorial' community, this method of apportionment was designed to guarantee equality of tenure. Nothing, I think, gives a more vivid sense of the sundering flood that rolls between the pre- and the post-enclosure systems than this provision in the partition and re-partition of the land. Lots were drawn for the meadowland (by the river or stream where there was one), and each share was pegged out by signs or marks, each of a different device, while the whole area was given over to common pasture after the hay harvest had been divided in proportion to the shares on the arable. This occurred on Lammas Day (12th August) and the common herdsmen drove the livestock of all the village commoners into the Lammas meadows. The arable land was subject to

a strict rotation of crops, one field under wheat, another under barley or pulse, and the third, also earmarked for common pasturage, fallow. The duties of the village herdsmen are reflected in the now meaningless jingle:

Little Boy Blue, come blow up your horn,  
The sheep's in the meadow the cow's in the corn.

Lastly, but as important for the synthetic economy of the village, there were the wastes and woodland to which various uses in commonalty were assigned. The 'common of estover' included the right of wood for building, repairs, and the like, the 'common of turbary' the right of turf, peat, and furze for fuel, and the right of pasture embraced all the domestic animals of the village. The expression 'by hook or by crook' refers to the peasant's right of lopping boughs with a long-handled bill-hook. The village itself, therefore, was not so much a casual cluster of natives and immigrants in our sense of the term as a single farm cultivated in partnership and by a group whose interests, activities, privileges, and obligations were enjoyed and respected by the shareholders of the whole community. Even though the shares were graded in the later village from separate holdings of five to those of two hundred acres, neither acute social distinctions nor the warfare, explicit or underground, of a competitive system were possible to a community whose lands, tools, and plough-teams were all part of the commonable property. The village community was a society which differed as radically from our own as the land to-day with its chequer-quilt of little fields and hedgerows differs from the open fields whose strips and baulks and winding inconsequent lanes leaving the clustered or scattered homesteads into the wilds or woods that encompassed every village, were in harmony with natural contours. The open plateau round Ewelme and its ancient 'cow-common' between the wooded Chilterns and the bare streamlined scarp of the Berkshire Downs is a perfect example of what that part of England looked like in the days of the village community. It was a system so wedded to the land that the varieties in the structure and the productions of

each village faithfully transcribed the diversities of English landscape.

The constitution of the village community effected an extraordinarily stable balance between socialism and ownership. Its governing body was the open-air assembly, meeting at a place sanctified by tradition and electing its own annual officers by popular and unanimous vote—the viewers, the common shepherd and herdsman, the pinder for straying cattle, the hayward, the chimney-sweeper, the reeve, the provost, and others. Even those natives more specialized and less intimate with the seasonal routine of agriculture—the smiths, the millers, the bee-keepers, the carpenters, bricklayers, masons, bakers, and fishermen—were, as members of a self-acting, self-sufficing, and self-governing local organism, granted holdings in the village fields in return for their services to the community. Graft, intrigue, bureaucracy, over-specialization, and other familiar evils that accompany national or imperial administration in the modern sense must surely have been kept in check by the free human contacts between man and man, the lack of financial incentive in the daily round, the bonds of traditional observance, the absence of social division and enmity, and the deep attachment of one and all to the land of their birth, their work, and their village. Freeholders and customary tenants, all were children of the genius of place. Modern socialism, being a machine similar in structure if differing in policy and principle from the existing machine of national government, cannot even conceive the nature of a society repeated, with a wide range of variations in detail, thousands of times over. In them, diversity of employment among all took the place of standardization; custom and common agreement of authority and law, and individual though not private ownership of the land, existed within the framework of a co-operative system. With farm servants and day labourers, but no landless proletarian class, the village community did accomplish the to us incredible feat of reconciling independence with interdependence, and tradition with the free play of the individual within the body of the

village. Those limits could hardly have been very exacting when much of the art, most of the architecture, and all of the craftsmanship of the Middle Ages rose out of the free township and the 'manorial' village. Its great disadvantages were the occurrences of famine owing to natural dispensations and the lack of open communications more onerous in medieval than, curiously enough, in prehistoric times.

Our modern schemes for the regeneration of society are born of the theory and technique of national government; the village community, largely oblivious of politics, law, and economics, settled its own affairs by reference to the integral contact of each member of the village and between them all and the land where they lived. The village community represented a fusion between the social, economic, domestic, and aesthetic life whose divisional energies all issued from the primal source of the land. It was the land, the place, that made all the difference between then and now. The holdings varied in extent, but the holders, yeomen or cottagers, ate the same kind of food, spoke the same local dialect, and shared the same knowledge by an experience at once personal and traditional, because everything within the boundaries of the parish, glebe, common, and pasture was of intimate concern to their daily lives. Making their own boots, smocks, implements, and earthenware, their candles for light and bricks for building, grinding their own corn and living on 'home-made' victuals, they wore an armour that only the development of commerce was able to penetrate. Our notion of the provincial life is of one stagnant, dull and narrow. But the old village contained not only a multiplicity of local interests, rites, handicrafts, and amusements, but each lived its own particular life as one star in a constellation—a universal faith and an international society. They were the folk who lived in fellowship on the soil and by the materials of their own portion of English country. By social equality and mutual aid Sinclair's 'barbarian state of society' maintained the Voltairian precept of getting the most out of your own.

In view of the manorial element inseparable from the

village community in its Saxon and medieval phases, I shall appear to have taken a too rose-coloured view of the latter. According to Seebohm, the village community was derived from the semi-servile institution of the Roman villa. At the same time, he gives many examples of the Welsh, Irish, and Scottish free tribal villages which held their lands by blood-brotherhood, and in more strictly equal shares of co-tenancy than in most parts of England. The Welsh system differed from the English both in the more equitable division of the produce among the co-operative tillers of the soil and because the holdings, being free of manorial control, were not subject to 'week-work' nor 'boon-work' during harvest from their tenants. The Welsh chief, the equivalent of the lord of the manor, was elected by the whole body of tribesmen, and only kept by them in the necessities of life. Since the tribal village of the 'run-rig' system, still surviving in a few regions of the *Outer Hebrides*, was a more primitive descendant of the Celtic tribal village than was the English, it is plain that the Roman villa cannot be called the parent of the latter. The Roman villa in England corresponds rather to the British colony in modern India. The English village community was practically the same as the Welsh with the addition of the manor superimposed upon it. Both antedated the manor and survived the break-up of feudalism. Modern archaeology reaffirms Vinogradoff's contention that the communal organization of the peasantry was older than the manorial order.

Sir Laurence Gomme disposed of Seebohm's claim on other grounds. He pointed out that Roman London was situated not in Britain but on the Ermine and Watling Streets. The Roman roads led to Rome, and Verulamium, Silchester, Eboracum were but stations along the route. The Roman power was measured by the Roman road, and when the Saxons overran Kent, London fell into two centuries of silence because its main artery was severed. When the Saxons occupied London itself, what did they do? They ignored the marts, the palaces, the basilicas, the hive of overseas commerce fed and stocked through a network of communications. They

founded the village communities they had inherited from their Teutonic forefathers at Charing and at Islington, at Fulham and at Kensington. Their tribal had no more to do with the Roman commercial system than had the Celtic village itself. A swarm of agricultural settlements at the feet of the downs and along the river banks, connected by narrow lanes and having names ending in 'ham,' 'ton,' or 'ing,' supplanted the Roman octopus. 'Long Acre' is the sole surviving name to remind us of the time when the environs of London were a chain of village communities, and Lammas lambs skipped in Leicester Square. On Cranborne Chase, on the Sussex Downs, on the rolling Wiltshire plateau, the villagers lived as they had done before the Romans organized them for taxation on behalf of Rome, and so harshly that the Iceni revolted like Robert Kett against the enclosures. The illustration is deliberate. In Roman Britain, Roman coinage took the place of inter-village barter, and factory-made pots, glass, brooches, and the like, ousted the local Celtic craftsman whose designs of meandering curves and scrolls had created a native and a village art as much the superior of the standardized Roman mass-production as is fresh to tinned salmon. In the fourth century A.D., large consignments of British corn were exported to Gaul, and it is possible that, if time had given the Romans more rope, they might have crushed the Celtic village community as the eighteenth-century squires did the medieval. But the Saxon invasion, bloody and rapacious as it was, saved England from something worse than a passing visitation of the modern spirit.

The manor, then, was imposed upon the village, the Saxon upon the Celtic, the Norman upon the Saxon. To this shifting of the scale of overlordship the Roman commercial and military occupation was irrelevant. For the very reason that Britain to Rome was as a cow to be milked in the pastures of the western ocean, the Romans never got inside the skin of the pre-Roman village, as the manor, through succession of dominance by conquerors that inherited the same system, certainly did. But the relations of the medieval lord of the

manor to his tenants were very different from those of the Georgian and Victorian landlords to the land that gave them by the development of trade the opportunity for its profitable exploitation. The interests of the Saxon or Norman lord were identical with those of his tenants, and his aim, therefore, was the maintenance of the community, not to put a new system in its place. Tawney points out that, in true medieval conditions, the manor was urgent in preserving the rough equality of the village community, in order to avoid disorganizing its old-fashioned economy. It was the biggest shareholder in a concern where all were graded in co-partnership. Sporadic survivals of the co-operative village into comparatively recent times clearly reveal the restrictions of the powers of the overlord of the village. At Pamber, for instance, the lord of the manor was elected as the village chief; in Lewis, he was fined by the village for the non-performance of the duties he shared with the rest of the community. He dealt with his tenants not as separate individuals but as members of a society.

Only in later times, again, did the manor-house sensibly depart in size and structure from the village farms. The fifteenth-century manor-house often possessed no more than a single bedroom, and it lay in the centre of the village, rarely more imposing than a farm-house built round a courtyard with offices and outhouses. The demesne itself was the home-farm rather than park or estate, and the lord, owning strips in the common fields and rights of pasturage on the common, was like the villagers subject to the immemorial traditions of local government and the decisions of the village assembly. Up to the twelfth century, the administration of village lands was still conducted in the open air and not in the hall of the manor. The transference from the one place to the other did in time increase the power of the lord, but the manorial courts for a long period preserved the democratic constitution of the assembly from which they were descended. In common with his tenants, the lord was the servant of the custom of the village, while the body of rites and observances

inherited from an almost timeless antiquity was a force that could not for a long passage of time be over-ridden by the naked will of the lord. So delicately adjusted was the mechanism of the village that when the commons were enclosed, the small holder was forced to sell all his live-stock, lacking their fodder, and thus lost the milk, butter, cheese, eggs, and meat they provided. The lord could not have *drastically interfered with any of the parts without dislocating the whole.*

What changes did take place in the impingement of manor upon village between the Saxon invasion and the Tudor enclosures involved the substitution of the lord of one culture for the lord of another, and the tipping of the scales in favour of the serfs and the customary tenants (villeins) and to the disadvantage of socmen and freeholders after the Norman Conquest. The onus of 'week-work' and 'boon-work' on the lord's demesne was gradually commuted for rent and other money equivalents. Vinogradoff has clearly shown that the villagers under the Normans pursued their own economic courses more or less in the manner they pleased while yielding rent and performing occasional customary services on the demesne. The villein who worked on the home-farm could own anything from half an acre to a virgate and even a hide of land, apart from his common rights, among the village strips, and the ladder was there to be climbed by the lowest. In Vinogradoff's own words:

The communal organization of the peasantry is more ancient and deeply laid than the manorial order. Even the feudal period shows everywhere traces of a peasant class living and working in economically self-dependent communities, under the loose authority of the lord whose claims may proceed from political causes and affect the semblance of ownership, but do not give rise to the manorial connection between estate and village.

As for the free and communal townships that were nuclei of rural life, they went right through the feudal period without owning any fealty to the manor. Thus the manor, which stamped the village communities with none of their essential features, expresses the contact between them and a central government in the days before local genius was overwhelmed



by the external world. Even under this 'loose authority,' the villagers possessed, in Tawney's words: 'that control over the conditions of their lives which is the essence of freedom.'

One other phenomenon I have to mark—the relation of the village community to historical progress. If the formula be rough, it is yet based on systematic inquiry. It works thus. The greater the degree of advance in matters such as the substitution of written for customary 'law,' of manorial assize for open-air assembly, the worse were the conditions of the peasantry. So, vice versa, the further back we delve into the past, the slighter were the differences between rich and poor, and the larger the freedom enjoyed by the village society. Vinogradoff (*Villeinage*) is explicit on this point:

It has to be noticed that the will and influence of the lord is much more distinct and overbearing in the documents of the late thirteenth and fourteenth century than in the earlier records; one more hint that the feudal conception of society took some time to push back older notions, which implied a greater liberty of the folk in regard to their rulers.

The *History of English Law*<sup>1</sup> states that 'of all landlords the religious houses were the most severe,' so that the old claim for the policy of the Church towards the peasantry as enlightened is baseless. Vinogradoff's statement tallies with the freer system of 'run-rig' practised by the tribal as compared with the village community into which it developed. Capitalistic society was of exceedingly slow growth and for its every movement the peasant was forced back into economic servitude.

If the manor was a superstructure upon an original foundation, of what age was the village itself before the rights of the cottagers had passed to the owners of the cottages? It is important to find out, because, though reason may think twice before it pays its respects to age, the antiquity of a thing, if it be long enough, confers a stability which takes reason in its stride. The tenacity of an institution is in itself good reason for its existence. The first thing to note is that the community system, as imaged by Piers Plowman in the fourteenth century:

Now is Jerkyn and his pilgrymes to the plowe faren,  
To erie his halve acre holpen hym manye,

<sup>1</sup> See Pollock and Maitland, quoted by Coulton in *The Medieval Village*, 1925.

is, as all students agree, practically identical even in terminology with that embodied in the laws of King Ine (A.D. 688), a century after the conquest of Wessex. The main differences were, as I have said, readjustments between the status of the freeholder and that of the villein and the disappearance of the servitude imposed by the Saxon invaders upon the Celtic labourers. Not, let me mark, a landless servitude as imposed by the extortionate fines, rack-renting, enclosures, evictions, and Poor Law penalization of some of the Tudor, most of the Georgian, and nearly all of the Victorian squires. A few scattered villages kept possession of their common lands right into the twentieth century, and of them the Isle of Axeholme, in the north-western corner of Lincolnshire is one of the best examples. Arthur Young said of the men of Axeholme who, knowing better than their betters, defeated the plot to enclose the Isle:

They are very happy respecting their mode of existence. Contrivance, mutual assistance by barter and hire enable them to manage these little farms. A man will keep a pair of horses that has but three or four acres by means of vast commons and working for hire.

The area of their open fields was still further reduced when Rider Haggard visited them and wrote:

It is one of the few places I have visited in England which is truly prosperous in an agricultural sense.

Progress is often as airy in its arguments as hasty in its steps. It forgets that small holders cultivate their own little farms much more thoroughly than big capitalist farmers do their big ones, especially when the former secure an artificial scarcity in order to force a rise in prices. The highest profit is not the same thing as the maximum produce. Thus, to begin with, the villages with their commonable lands survived intact from the Saxon Conquest to the Tudor enclosures, three-fifths of them from the sixteenth to the late eighteenth and the remnants into the twentieth century.

In their appearance, the arable fields of the British Celts differ in shape and size from the Saxon strips and lynchets on

<sup>1</sup> I have given an account of the *contemporary* conditions prevailing in the Isle of Axeholme in a forthcoming book.

the lower slopes of the hills. This was a difference not of traditional organization but of capacity as between the primitive and the more developed ploughshare. The Celtic fields on the downs were broad and obtuse oblongs because, unlike the eight-oxen plough-teams of the Saxons and of the Middle Ages, their ploughs, drawn by a pair of oxen, were unable to undercut the turf. The development of the wide short length of the furlong into the narrow long one was the result of the evolution of the plough through the 'Teutonic invention' (see Dr. Cecil Curwen's *Prehistoric Sussex*) of the share that turned the sods. The fact that the Roman plough only scratched the soil is a further proof that the Roman villa did not originate the village community.

Since I have now reached the dim hinterland of printless record, let me follow the best archaeological opinion as to the nature of the prehistoric village community in England. The Neolithic villages (2000 B.C.) on Windmill Hill near Avebury, on Whitehawk Hill near Brighton, at Maiden Castle near Dorchester, and elsewhere, were surrounded by ditches and ramparts broken by causeways. Within lay a rough circle of thatched huts with 'little cultivated fields like allotments' near by. Pigs were kept and pens built for holding cattle and sheep, while the fields were hoed by digging-sticks that were the originals of the primitive Highland *caschrom* or 'overtread plough' of the Welsh Triads. As the hut-circles of Dartmoor reveal, there was no break in the continuity of village custom and tradition during the Bronze Age. The Neolithic village was 'typical of life in England for over a thousand years,' and 'agriculture and the general life of the village must have been much the same in 1000 B.C. as in 2000 B.C.' The native pottery declined, but the village smiths, undisturbed by foreign invasion, were quick to invent and evolve fresh bronze implements more effective in husbandry than flint.

Between 800 B.C. and 500 B.C., new colonizations flooded England, those of the first Celts (the Hallstatt or Urnfield culture), and their successors of the La Tène I or Early Iron

Age. The earthen acropolis of the Iron Age Celts, built in triple tiers of oval fosse and ramparts on the chalk, granite, and limestone hills, was a modification of the Greek *polis*. Following the historical axiom that barbarians imitate the social structure of the culture they dominate, the Celtic town adapted itself to the social organization of the Neolithic village. Such Celtic citadels as Maiden Castle, constructed on the site of the Neolithic village that preceded it, were the originals in idea of the free medieval township. The ruling caste of the new invaders was military and aristocratic. It produced nothing itself and lived on the labour of the non-Aryan peasants. These offshoots of the Homeric heroes were, as a distinguished archaeologist calls them, the 'forerunners of the medieval barony.' But the chieftains differed in this respect from the manorial lords. They were elective, as I have shown by the example of the Welsh tribal community, and more strictly controlled by the free tribesmen. The same archaeologist described the Iron Age village as similar to the Neolithic. The squarish arable fields outside the town were separate from the open grazing land to which covered ways led from well-timbered houses. Just as in the medieval village, the herds were driven into the wooden gates of the town wall at sunset. The thatched villages and farms clustered some distance away from the ramparts, and the villagers brought their produce to the market town to be bartered for the leather, cloth, tools, and other domestic industries of the tribe. 'The whole organization of Celtic England,' writes the same authority, 'is very like that of the Middle Ages.'

Sir Laurence Gomme held similar views in the field of comparative religion and sociology. He gave many examples of his contention that the traditional practices of agriculture were survivals of an earlier economy, and traditional practices in folk-lore of an earlier ritual. But even he did not realize how unparalleled, how awe-inspiring the antiquity of the village community actually was. He writes of the medieval township: 'Here came persons specially empowered to exchange the produce and manufactures of one little village

community for those of another.' He lacked the modern opportunity to note that exactly the same process, based on the same principles, methods, and social philosophy, were taking place in the stupendous earthworks of Maiden Castle, nearly 2,000 years before, the Celtic town that inherited the traditions of the Neolithic village 1,500 years before that. Seebohm's description of the early Welsh tribal community might be applied, with trifling sub-editing, to the township of Malmesbury before its lands passed to the abbey.

The significance of the megalithic monolith of the Bronze Age, of the stone circles of Stonehenge, of Avebury, and of Arbor Lowe, becomes less obscure when we understand that the setting up of a stone was an unwritten law of the more primitive village community. When Jack Cade entered London in 1450, he struck his sword upon London Stone and cried, 'Now is Mortimer lord of this city,' knowing by folk-memory what he did. So at Bovey Tracey, to take one of a thousand examples, the mayor rode round the stone cross and, tapping it with his baton, proclaimed his authority, while the young men kissed it, vowing to uphold the ancient rights and privileges. The bite of traditional custom goes deeper than the scratch of law. It was at the Celtic 'circus' or round the sacred stone or tree (there are many examples scattered over the more sequestered country regions) that the open-air assemblies met and for the ancient rites conducted the games, festivals, and processions that were derived from them. The offerings to the Earth-goddess passed easily into the offerings to a patron saint or patroness Virgin Mary who shared in many of her attributes. Not without reason did George Bourne write:

Out of the pride of skill in handicrafts, the detailed understanding of the soil and its materials, the general effect of the well-known landscape, the faint sense of something venerable in its associations, came an influence that acted as a guide to the village conduct, so that the villagers observed the seasons proper to their varied pursuits *almost as though they were going through some ritual.*

The italics are my own. Ritual, founded by the ancestral form of the village community and swayed by the periodic rhythms of nature, had entered so deeply into the subconscious

mind of the peasant that it integrated his whole life. It gave dignity to his labours, depth and joy to his celebrations of them and a sense of something universal in his partnership both with nature and his fellows. How appalling to him must have been the loss by which he became a lonely and landless wage-earner, exiled or at marketable odds with his former companions in work and in play, with pauperism and unemployment the spectres of his home and only a mechanized toil for a master to charm them away!

In the words of archaeology, the Neolithic village 'continued singularly unchanged for some four thousand years.' Its prehistoric life was 'usually peaceful,' unless fretted in the 'Heroic Age' by brawls between the chiefs. When we think of the feudal barons razing one another's castles and carrying the socmen off to Agincourt, we can confirm the similar statement that '250 B.C. and A.D. 1350 were nearly indistinguishable.' It was the landowner, not the villager, who profited by the Napoleonic wars.

The astounding longevity of the village community seems to me one of the most, if not the most, memorable thing in the history and pre-history of England. An antiquity so vast covers all argument and does in a way silence all criticism. But that it virtually had no history is yet more extraordinary. It existed as a self-governing organism that functioned by internal custom and tradition, and was largely independent not only of external law but of foreign invasion, political change, and national progress. We do not normally associate vitality with an extreme conservatism, but here the one was the condition of the other. It is obvious that there must have been a considerable elasticity within the mechanism and a constant readiness to modify and adapt it to changing conditions. A structure too rigid would have cracked under so heavy a pressure of time. Practical experience was constantly at hand to overhaul the mechanism, and it is noteworthy that the communal village did produce many reformers, the spiritual force of the Lollard movement, and a bounty of rich idiom and folk-poetry quite apart from its handicrafts,

its local architecture, and the highly individual quality of its produce. Such elements do not spell stagnation. Still less do we associate conservatism with social equality and the co-operative spirit, but here they were one. To reach such a conclusion I have been forced to make a very dull and prosaic retrospect. But surely the end has justified the means when a fact so wonderful emerges. It is so wonderful that there appears to be only one explanation for it. The village community articulated the natural state and the instinctive disposition of man as a social unit passing through a civilized and alien environment which failed, except quite incidentally, to influence it. The true environment of this community was nature herself, its own little patch of nature.

How fruitful was that union in all things except material progress is expressed in the telling figures—2000 B.C. to A.D. 1800. Empires and dynasties, wars and revolutions, social convulsions, redemptions and prostrations were scribbled without number and then erased from the Book of Political Man. The glory of the village community is its blank page. It exchanged one lord for another and the foot-plough for the mattock. It put two oxen to the plough and then added six more. But of all the social experiments of man it was nearest to eternity. It lasted. It only steps into history when commerce and progress destroyed it.

That event was the greatest crime in England's past. England's present shows that it was also her greatest blunder. The ruin of the peasantry in the eighteenth century has been followed by the ruin of the land in the twentieth. Defenceless, its weedy fields with their skinny hedges and choked ditches, its desecrated woods and dales, polluted rivers and deserted hills, lie open to a horde of speculators whose rape far exceeds in violence the worst excesses of the old barbarian invaders. Our only remedy for this plague of Progress is to buy up and set aside a few acres as museum pieces for sightseers. But if we want a countryside which is a living whole and not a mummified fragment, we shall have to borrow some of our capital from the past. Even granted an urban population so

preposterously swollen as it is to-day, it is still possible to do a great deal towards the restoration of the English countryside. As Cicero said: 'Nothing is more excellent than agriculture, nothing more productive, nothing more pleasant, nothing more worthy of free men.' If we lack the will to do this act of reparation, that is our own look-out. If the dairy farmers of a district, instead of living on mortgaged farms, letting their land fall into deeper decay and neglect every year, and all at cut-throat competition with one another, would combine to set up a co-operative milking plant with graded and sterilized milk and collective distribution, they could afford to give their labourers a shareholder's interest in it. That is what the labourer needs more than he needs his minimum wage. He is not only a highly skilled worker who inherits by unconscious memory the profound local knowledge of the old villagers; he is also a man of such variety of occupation as removes him a world away from the mechanized and specialized workman of the towns. Yet there is neither promotion nor increase of wage nor possession of land for him. At seventy he is where he was at twenty. Once give him a stake in this combine-farm and a new local life will arise from the ashes of the one that is dead.

The restoration of village prosperity merely by the mechanization of farming is an idle dream. What has to be rediscovered and restored by methods and appliances in harmony with our present environment is the living spirit of the old village community. The modern equivalents of the open field system, commonable pasture, and co-aration are the co-operative purchase of machinery, seeds, and manures, the borrowing of capital, stock-breeding, and the sale of produce in common together with the provision of allotment fields. Preservation of the land by chance bequest or desperate purchase can only be a temporary bandage for a broken anatomy. The evil is within. It can be expelled only by the resurrection of the genius of place which was nurtured by the ancient village.

The problem of the countryside is identical with the problem of the countryman.



## *Laughter in the South-East*

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SHEILA KAYE-SMITH

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KENT and Sussex have always been particularly liable to invasion. Their position in the south-eastern corner of England, nearest to France, has made them a landing ground for Europe from the earliest times. Caesar put his legions ashore at Deal, and William the Conqueror grounded his galleys at Pevensey. The Middle Ages show a continuous stream of minor invasions from France—the burning and harrying of coast towns, of the redoubtable Cinque Ports. Later came a more peaceful invasion by Flemish refugees, building their cloth-halls and planting their cherry gardens in the forest clearings of Kent. This influx merged with the greater tide of Huguenot immigrants, which poured in for nearly a century and a half and marked not only the outward aspect of the countryside but its language and place-names. Last of all the threat of Bonaparte fell on this particular corner of England and expressed itself in the martello towers which still survive as ruins or week-end residences.

These were all invasions from outside, from abroad. But at the beginning of the nineteenth century a new kind of invasion started from London. 'Prinny' discovered Brighton, and changed a secluded fishing village into a fashionable resort, while a host of minor celebrities followed his example and discovered other towns. Decimus Burton the architect planned a new town west of Hastings, the Duke of Devonshire changed the fishermen's huts of Bourne into the marine villas of Eastbourne. And so it went on. The sea-coast became popular, people bathed no longer only on doctor's orders, and a social life rose in places that, if they had ever been places at all, had been places of seclusion and retirement.

The south coast was the nearest to London and therefore the most quickly transformed. Soon a succession of resorts spread from the Isle of Wight to Margate, attracting first the wealthy, then the middle classes, and finally the crowds to the sea. The sands, the cliffs, the dunes, whatever lovely lonely barrier nature had set up, became atrocious with slate roofs and stucco frontages. The spoiling of Kent and Sussex is not a recent, post-war catastrophe, but dates from the first pinnacle of the Steyne.

There was, however, in those days the consoling thought (if any one then had wanted consolation) that the country between London and the sea remained as before, lovely and inviolate. Brighthelmstone and Bourne had been laid waste, but Hassocks, Ditchling, Cuckfield, Crawley, and a hundred other villages lay untouched behind them. Even the coming of the railways did not bring many changes, except to certain towns on the route, such as Lewes and Tunbridge Wells. It was not till a later phase of railway history 'opened up' the countryside between London and the coast that a host of squalid little buildings rose around the stations of Uckfield, Horsted Keynes, and other sweet Auburns, desecrated rather than deserted.

We could dispute the point whether a house fit to look at has been built in England since the Regency—excepting those specially created by leading architects, and not always excepting those. Certainly that inevitable solidity and beauty which can be seen, mellowed and enhanced by time, in the buildings set up by humble workmen in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, survives only as the art of the trained and cultured few. Another point which might be disputed if it were worth disputing is whether the building of the present age is more or less hideous than that of the Victorians, whether the mark of the car on the countryside shows uglier as well as sprawls wider than the mark of the railway.

We blame, of course, the railway and the car, but the villain of the piece is not mechanical though he drives the machine. Recently a certain newspaper entered into

controversy with one of its readers on the somewhat dog-eared subject of the younger generation. The reader lamented the absence of a code for modern youth, which she put down to neglectful parents, giving up Sunday instructions for Sunday excursions. The paper retorted that an afternoon spent in our fresh and lovely countryside is more healthy for body and mind than an afternoon spent in a stuffy drawing-room, even at mother's knee. A side-issue of the dispute, unobserved by either of the combatants, was that the Victorian habit of reading sermons to the young on Sunday afternoons had no devastating effects beyond the home circle, whereas the modern fashion of spending Sunday inevitably spreads noise, chaos, and ugliness within a radius of a hundred miles.

If the Puritan Sunday had remained, so would much of modern England that has been destroyed. The same good effect would also have followed the bad old causes of over-work and under-pay, had not the spread of democracy brought a comparatively early retirement from business within the reach of the wage-earning as well as of the professional classes. It is unfortunate that the degree of enlightenment which has removed so much of the grimness and injustice of Victorian England should have failed when it had to deal with the consequences of these reforms. The countryside has been opened to all, both for Sunday recreation and for the healthy and peaceful spending of life's last leisure. But how much of it will be there to benefit the next generation?

Very little of Kent and Sussex, I venture to predict. Once again their geographical position is unfortunate. They offer a coast within reach of a London car-ride, and the car, unlike the train, does not clot its horrors at the journey's end but smears them along the way. It is no doubt natural that those who associate the country with Sunday's escape from toil and town should plan to live in it, either at once or when they retire from business. A large part of Kent and Sussex is within such easy reach of London that it is possible for workers to live there and yet attend daily to their shops and offices. The rest is accessible from other towns, so there is no area where a

small house may not spring up suddenly to give the worker fresh air and quiet at week-ends or even every night. There need be no limit to building save the land available, and there can be few parts of non-industrial England more closely built over than these two counties.

Building obviously need not in itself be offensive, as witness the buildings of the earlier invaders. Kent and Sussex were not empty lands when the Victorians first discovered them. A characteristic of East Sussex and West Kent (both geographically distinct from their other halves) is the number of small, ancient houses that dot the fields away from the villages—cloth-halls, tanhouses, furnaces, and farms put up by the Flemish and French settlers, which actually outnumber those they must have found when they came.

It is a crowded little bit of England, but how beautifully crowded! The walls of ruddy-golden brick, the tarred weather-boarding, the thatched roofs, coloured like dead bracken, the tiled roofs red and gold and russet as that same bracken in autumn, the oasts black or red with their snow-white cowls, all suggest a natural growth rather than an artificial construction. And it is not only time that has done this. Built of the baked soil on which they stand, of the straw and timber growing on it, they are actually a part of earth, and their soft, muddled shapes—spreadingly set under hipped gables and roofs that slope protectively to windward—follow the lines of the fields around them, the squat little hills, the hollows thick with woods. Compare them with the modern villa set up stiffly like a match-box on end, with the bungalow coloured a pink that can be seen nowhere else save in boiled crustaceans, with the garage of corrugated iron, the castellated shop-front, and then address yourself to time, in your hopes no longer the preserver but the destroyer.

The issue is only fogged by moral considerations, such as the worker's right to live in the country, the claims of the small house as against the large one, the selfishness of those who want to have the landscape to themselves. These people who build hideously and haphazardly are destroying the

very thing they come out to seek, for themselves as well as for others. The fact that they are unaware that they have destroyed it only makes their position more pitiable. G. K. Chesterton once compared the man who defaces the countryside with the man who defaces an old master by cutting his initials on the canvas. The comparison is apt in that the countryside is a work of art rather than of nature, of man's inspired planning and cultivation. The English countryside is beautiful not by virtue of its natural contours, but by virtue of man's improvement of it—the woods and orchards he has planted, the fields he has enclosed, the lanes he has trodden out between the hamlets, the churches and houses he has built. He has used natural materials as all artists do, be it camelhair or catgut, but he has created the fields as he has not created the Alps. It seems an unnecessary irony that he should destroy his own work out of sheer enthusiasm for it.

For he has destroyed it in a large measure. Let us forget the railway posters and the house-agents' advertisements, all the gush about Beautiful Britain, and realize that we have out of sheer ignorance, ineptitude, money-love, and self-delusion made away with one of our national assets. England is not rich in the grander forms of scenery, but she is—or rather was—absolutely pre-eminent in the type of scenery we are causing rapidly to disappear. There is nothing in Europe, in America, in the whole world in fact, like the English countryside, as it still survives in spots.

These spots get monthly further and fewer, and they are guarded with an ever-increasing jealousy by those who love them—for who knows what any visiting stranger may do in the way of wiping them out? They also become less intrinsically lovely, for we are approaching the point when only the duller, less beautiful parts of the country remain unspoilt. Let a place once become known as a beauty spot, and it is ruined—overrun by hordes of builders and garage, charabanc, café, shop proprietors, living as it were on its immoral earnings. Even if some rescue society may contrive to save it, all that happens is that the ugliness settles round it instead of on it. I

have long felt the uselessness of attempting to save any threatened piece of England smaller than a thousand acres, knowing that the advertisement only attracts spoliation and the result is a worse blot than if the trouble had been left unadvertised.

The part of England most familiar to me has suffered a very recent decline. Coming into it seven years ago, after an absence of nearly as long, I was astonished and delighted to find how little it had changed. But all that now seems like a dream, and the waking facts are much the same as the facts in other parts of England. The cause of the devastation certainly is typical—the selling up of big estates, though this would not in itself have mattered much down here if farming had remained reasonably prosperous. Unfortunately the sale of the manor coincided with the general slump, and the farmers who had bought in their farms soon found themselves in difficulties.

The next thing to happen was either that they put up their farms for sale or they decided to lop off pieces of their land and offer them as eligible building sites. I know one small field—only just over an acre—which contains no less than seven bungalows. The road frontage of another field was sold off in lots, the farmer selling to a relative of his who was in the building line. A little further down the road a hop-garden was grubbed up and sold after the glut of 1929, and laid out for no less than fifty bungalows—a scheme mercifully frustrated by the application of the Town Planning Act. It must be remembered that the value of agricultural land round here is about ten pounds an acre; therefore a sale at fifteen or twenty pounds an acre is a windfall for the farmer, though dirt cheap for the speculative builder.

These circumstances led to a building boom during years when building slowed down considerably in other parts of England. It was an entirely local mischief—with a little help from the neighbouring towns; we cannot blame any foreign speculators for our downfall. Just as the empty cigarette packets, silver paper, and orange peel which fester at the bus

stops are regrettably not the work of trippers, as is generally supposed, but of the local users of the bus, so the prevalent bungalow (we seldom build in two stories) is almost exclusively a local creation.

When the farms slumped and turned off their hands, these men became builders. The Sussex farm-labourer is a Jack of all trades, and most field workers have some experience of plastering, bricklaying, and carpentering, though none could properly be called 'skilled.' Many of the dispossessed hedgers and ditchers, ploughmen and cowmen of the farms, were able, at the farms' collapse, to find work which though paid below union rates was nevertheless better paid than their work as agricultural labourers.

Some of these men were taken on by local building firms, but others formed themselves into little syndicates and proceeded to buy land cheaply, building still more cheaply on it. The capital of these syndicates would be found locally—at least no further than the neighbouring town—and a great deal of it came out of the savings of the workers themselves. If any one asks me how it is possible to save on an agricultural labourer's wage, I can only reply that it is constantly done. I know one man who has never had more than thirty-two shillings a week, who yet has managed to send both his children to the grammar-school, and another (married, without children) who out of a weekly wage of thirty-six shillings has saved in four years just on fifty pounds. An impecunious squire once said to me: 'Doesn't it make you mad, the money these people have?'—which was ungenerous, as you can always save money if you never spend it. The Sussex working man devotes most of his leisure to a change of work—carpentering, papering his house, or digging his garden. He seldom goes to the cinema, and when he goes to the pub is generally content to sit all the evening over half a pint. He gambles—if he gambles at all—in occasional sixpences, and his living expenses are so much reduced by his own gardening and poultry keeping, with occasional rabbit snaring, and rents which on the whole are still low, that unless he has a large family—

and families in the country are decreasing as well as in the towns—he is nearly always able to put by something every year.

This money goes into the Post Office Savings Bank or to the local building society, or sometimes into the building syndicate for which the man himself is working. Other larger investors are the local tradesmen or any one who has something saved. These do not care as a rule for the usual type of investment, which nowadays pays all too small a dividend, and which they distrust for other reasons. The land is safe and solid, and will ultimately—and they are all patient—pay them something more than three and a half per cent. 'I've got some money put by,' the policeman's daughter said to me, 'and I'm thinking of buying a field and building bungalows.' I know a gipsy, too, who has just bought a field for this purpose for three hundred pounds. If he is as patient as his Gorgio neighbours, he ought to double his capital in a few years.

During the slump a number of farmers put up their farms for sale, and found it impossible to dispose of them, at least at a price that would cover the inevitable mortgage. Then a firm of house agents in a neighbouring town conceived the idea of buying these farms and dividing them up into lots. The farm-house, usually old and picturesque, would be sold by itself with its orchard and garden and a small shed or two. The oasts and barns would be sold to enterprising townspeople with a passion for the quaint, for conversion at vast expense into week-end retreats. Having now made the farm utterly useless for farming, the agent would proceed to dispose of the land as best he could—he had probably already got back his original outlay in the sale of the house and buildings. Some of it would be pushed off on neighbouring owners with the threat of 'development,' some of it would go as small holdings (the purchaser to build), and some would go as sites for the inevitable bungalows of local speculation ('Mrs. —, she's made a lot of money in —,' mentioning a village of some five hundred inhabitants, 'so she's building bungalows').

Recently a farm of sixty acres was sold off in this way. It was bought from the farmer at a flat rate of twenty pounds



an acre, which was fabulous good luck for him, as some of the land was waterlogged marshland and would have been difficult to sell at all in ordinary circumstances. The agents sold it off at prices varying from forty to twenty pounds the acre, and at the end of two years not an acre was unsold. How did they get rid of the marshland? It went as building sites.

I have recently learned that people will buy land for building without even inspecting it, relying entirely on the agent's map and description. No less than four optimists bought sites in this marshy valley, and proceeded to erect houses, though their efforts were cramped by the fact that there was no road whatever leading even to the nearest. The first prospector had to drive his car through a field of standing corn. Later on frame buildings were dumped by the roadside and somehow carted to the sites, though a good-sized stream with nothing but a plank to cross it by must have made the process extremely difficult. Soon afterwards local officials were receiving complaints that tradesmen refused to deliver goods to these new landowners, and everywhere raged battles over a right of way which the agents had omitted to show on their maps. A further complication was added by the fact that owners of remoter parcels of land could not reach the road without crossing other people's land through which there was no right of way, and therefore could be bottled into their own domains at the will of those who held the roadside territory. The social atmosphere of these new settlements is sometimes rather tense.

And what of the buildings themselves that are put up here? Local application of the Town Planning Act has checked the crop of shacks and 'portables,' though not before a number of these were already in position. The district council has also done good work in censoring unsuitable plans, though there have been some notable lapses, and has even produced one or two designs of its own for the guidance of would-be builders. A low whitewashed house, with a dark tiled roof, is not unpleasing, especially if it introduces such a local characteristic as the hipped gable. Personally I find the

bungalow style less obtrusive than the house of two or more stories. Surrounding greenery soon blots at least part of it out, and it is in keeping with the cottage traditions of Kent and Sussex, where buildings of similar design have existed before the name of bungalow was ever heard of in England.

Visitors from the north have commented favourably on the comparatively innocuous style of our local building. It certainly lacks the flamboyance which erects ornate villas on the edges of the Yorkshire moors and fits all bungalows with stained-glass windows. The fault of the local style is a tendency to squalor; though shacks are now forbidden in most districts, the various buildings as a rule lack the simplicity and solidity which characterize the older dwellings, however humble. There is also too much asbestos tiling; and though I suppose that it is too late to lament over the slate roofs that came to Sussex and Kent with the railways (even some of the oast-houses are slated), *one wishes that the town planning authorities would show a little more local patriotism in this respect.*

As for the people who live in these new buildings, they leave the problem of local housing almost untouched. The new houses are either only put up to order, or else are for sale, or to let at rents far beyond the purse of the local farm-worker, whose average wage in these parts is under thirty-five shillings a week. Such houses as have been put up by the various communities with grants from the Ministry of Health are mostly, not always, very much superior in appearance to the efforts of the speculative builder. One reason for this, of course, is that the cottages are not detached, so scope is given for more dignified designing as well as a saving made in the costs of erection.

I have merely recorded facts and indicated immediate causes. The remedy of these things is too much coiled round with every complicated form of ignorance and self-interest to inspire much hope for the future. I have also confined my remarks to building only, though an article might be written on the destruction of our lovely historic Kent and Sussex lanes,

stripped, gashed, widened, and straightened in order that the motorist may drive more swiftly and dangerously. This latter development makes one despair of any help coming from the State. The State has in many ways been one of the biggest offenders. What is one to hope from, then? Public opinion? The general public, hypnotized by newspaper photographs and railway advertisements, either does not know that rural England is nearly destroyed, or else, satisfied with speed and roadhouses, does not care. Even local opinion, the opinion of the devastated areas, is not likely to stop the evil. The people who sell the land and the people who build on it are all making money, and the people who live in the new houses probably spend more in the neighbourhood than the farmers and landowners they succeed. Only here and there, from some gardener who would like again to follow the plough, or some garage hand who would rather have the care of beasts, do you hear a lament for the England that is gone.

By the time these words are in print a scheme will either have been passed or rejected by the Tenterden District Council for building a town of two hundred houses on the eastern slope of the Isle of Oxney.

The Isle of Oxney was a little pip of a county wedged between Sussex and Kent. It rose out of the marsh to a couple of hundred feet and went hillocking east and west for about four miles, a mile less north and south. As soon as the marshes were left behind the ground became good marl, and there were many farms caught in a web of little twisting lanes. The farms were mostly tumbling places, but their riot was a wholesome, vegetable kind—bright colours and soft, pungent smells, like wasp-thridden apples lying in the grass. The barns with their tarred walls and great waving sprawls of roof, the oasthouses with their red cones and white cowl, were all so many fungus growths, pushed up by the soil rather than built by man. It was hard also to think that any man ever planted those trailed and thicketed hedges, which in their way were as wild as the little woods that patched the fields.

I apologize for quoting from one of my own novels which describes the Isle of Oxney as it appeared in 1840. It has changed very little since then—the railways and the great motor roads have left it in peace. But now it is proposed to build these houses costing between £400 and £500—too dear

to be let economically to the underhoused inhabitants of the place, too cheap to give much hope of pleasing and suitable construction.

A short while ago a meeting was called of the villagers and farmers, and concerned itself exclusively with the question of how much money the new idea would either bring in or drive out of the district. No other point was raised, save by one speaker. I quote from the local paper his words and their reception. 'Agriculture,' he said, 'is the most important asset of the Isle of Oxney (hear! hear!). The next important is the beauty of the countryside (laughter).' So in laughter—oafish? ironic? Olympic?—the beauty of England passes away.

# Havoc

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E. M. FORSTER

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THE England which we love and are losing gives me the impression of being about three hundred years old. Geology and even history go back further, but the seventeenth century seems to be the period when this present countryside evolves. Previously there had been forests, marshes, rivers, glades, dens, but in the seventeenth century an Oxford don could go for a walk before Hall and write:

When Westwell Downs I 'gan to tread  
Where cleanly winds the green did sweep,  
Methought a landscape there was spread,  
Here a bush and there a sheep.

This is not great literature, but it is the chalk downs—'here a bush and there a sheep'—it is what we can still see in between the aerodromes and ribbon development. And in that same century another author, who had not even been to a university, can write:

Light thickens, and the crow  
Makes wing to the rooky wood,

and can transport us to the sights and sounds of a contemporary November evening. The earlier stuff—Chaucer's *Harbledown*, Langland's *Malvern*, 'Lhude sing cuccu,' and so on—is too remote and generalized; it has no poignancy or contour. From the seventeenth century onwards we are in touch with what is being seen and heard, we are the inheritors.

What are we doing with our inheritance? Every one can answer that sorry question. In the last fifteen years we have gashed it to pieces with arterial roads, trimmed the roads with trash, and ruined several selected areas systematically. We

laugh at Ruskin, fretting and railing because a little dirt fell from a factory into a stream, but Ruskin knew what was ahead. . . . He preached and no one took any notice, and now we have the Great West Road, Peacehaven, Paignton. There seems no hope of checking the general destruction, for too many forces contribute to it. The island stays the same size, but the population increases; the means of transport increase, the needs of the fighting services are allowed to increase. Something has to decrease, and it has to be the woods and downs, hedges and birds. All that we can effect on the other side is to segregate and schedule certain places, in the hope of the madness passing. Perhaps civilization may take a sensible turn. If it does it will be grateful to us for bequeathing a few samples of the countryside, of the beauty that took three hundred years to grow, and can never be replaced.

The fighting services are bound to become serious enemies of what is left of England. Wherever they see a tract of wild, unspoiled country they naturally want it for camps, artillery practice, bomb-dropping, poison-gas tests. I remember Salisbury Plain thirty years ago, when the cancer was beginning to gnaw at its eastern lobe, round Bulford, but all the rest was pure. Now the plain is infected from side to side; there is machine-gun practice behind Heytesbury, and flags lolling their tongues of blood up the lanes to Imber-in-the-Down. In Dorsetshire, Bere Heath (Hardy's Egdon) has been attacked by the Tank Corps, which is also responsible for the ruining of the land near Lulworth Cove. The Air Force has perched upon Abbotsbury, immemorial breeding ground of swans, and the Air Ministry has announced that the swans shall not mind the noise of the explosives. As for Plymouth—its inhabitants are so thoroughly defended that they have scarcely anywhere to walk except the Hoe. As for the home counties, there has been an attempt to get powers over some of the western Surrey commons. As for London itself, one of the largest open spaces near it is Woolwich Arsenal. Woolwich is a park of death, composed of weedy fields. It is not a building, it is a district; one drives across it in a car. Mile after mile the desolation

spreads. In one of the fields is the 'iron grave'—a mass of metal containing the corpse of a man who fell into it while it was in a molten condition.

Much has been said about the damage done to the countryside by private selfishness, too little about the destruction wrought by National Defence. 'And pray don't you want to be defended? Where would you be if . . .' etc. Yes, yes, I know. But I also know that military men, though they have many virtues and much charm, are incurably wasteful. They order stuff carelessly, and throw it away all spoiled, and I don't want them to order and throw away more pieces of England. A severe scrutiny should be made in the case of every new request for land, and the Mr. Baldwin who demands preparedness and armaments should keep in touch with the Mr. Baldwin who is a vice-president of the National Trust.

The Trust has a splendid record. It was founded forty years ago, mainly through the efforts of Miss Octavia Hill, and now it owns a total acreage of some 60,000, distributed amongst two hundred and thirty-seven properties. Fifteen of these properties are very large—over 1,000 acres each. The Lakes are the supreme triumph; when we find them unspoilt we feel vaguely that it is because they are unwanted. Nothing of the sort; they are unspoilt because the Trust got hold of them in time, partly by acquiring land, partly by securing restrictive covenants over private property, so that it shall not be further built on. To Canon Rawnsley in the past generation, to Professor G. M. Trevelyan in the present, much of our thanks are due; they have saved the most magical corner of England, where delicacy and strength have united as nowhere else in the world.

This policy of large areas seems very sound. Beauty spots are danger spots, because when they have been saved, they may attract buildings, which fall around them like a quoit. The large area can't be spoilt by houses round the edge. With luck we may see the creation in the next few years of a series of national parks (there is already a scheme for one in Wales), and this seems the best thing that can happen in an imperfect

world and a congested island. Though does your heart leap up at the idea of national parks? Mine doesn't, because the England I care for is composed of oddments and trifles, which decline to be scheduled—the light thickening, the crow flying into the wood, here a bush and there a sheep, the England of Cowper and Crabbe, Tennyson and Housman. Snowdon may be saved, but the molehills are levelled, and the moles killed. Only last summer the lane where I live was subtly ruined. It had been for centuries a hollow 'smugglers' lane between high sandy banks, and it serves my house, another private house, and a farm—nothing more: beyond the farm it turns into a cart-track. Everything was peaceful, and then suddenly the local authority awoke. Crash went the picks, down went the gravel and the tar, up and down went the steam roller, the level of the lane was raised and hardened, and all its mystery sterilized. Neither of the two houses wanted this foolish improvement, and the farm detests it, because cars are now rushing up, in the belief that they can get through, finding themselves in a blind alley, and having to turn by the duckpond. It doesn't much matter, but it seems so silly—money squandered in order to make the country a little uglier—and it's happening everywhere. The grand tourist centres can be saved, the small things will vanish unless our officials get a new mentality, of which I see no chance.

Sweet Be'mi'ster that bist a-bound  
 By green an' woody hills all round,  
 Wi' hedges, reachèn up between  
 A thousan' vields o' zummer green,  
 Where elms' lofty heads do drow  
 Their sheâdes vor hay-meakers below,  
 An' wild hedge-flow'rs do charm the souls  
 O' maidens in their evenèn strolls. . . .

—that is the sort of England that will vanish: Sweet Beaminster and Binsey Poplars and the Lesser Celandine.



## *The Landowner's Contribution*

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W. A. EDEN

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'It will be better to keep it together. It is the way in which the country has become what it is.' In these words of Archdeacon Grantly, Trollope summarized the effect on the land of the English law of primogeniture. 'It' was the Plumstead estate, with its switch-back pastures enclosed, we may be sure, within double-oxer hedges, dotted about with hedgerow elms, and backed by spinneys and gorse coverts for the convenience of the unofficial lords of the manor—the foxes. Not placing too literal a construction on the injunction to lay not up for himself treasures upon earth, the venerable—and respectable—archdeacon had been assiduous enough in laying them up for his sons and grandsons, and no doubt it would have been illogical on his part to have refrained, meanwhile, from enjoying them himself. There was perhaps more than enough for his own needs, but then he had two sons to provide for. So, at least, he thought until in a moment of anger he decided that his heir should be singular and not plural, and in doing so he told himself that he was only following the traditions of the English countryside.

The policy of 'keeping it together' did, indeed, make possible some of the most significant developments in English rural history, particularly in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. On the delightfully confident assumption that an estate would remain intact, to be enjoyed by a man's heirs and assigns for ever, long-term experiments in agriculture and what was characteristically called rural ornament could be embarked on. The enclosure of the common fields, improvements in crop rotations, the reconstruction of many of

the villages and extensive schemes of landscape gardening were carried out at the instigation of men who thought in terms of generations rather than of years. That attitude is becoming necessarily more and more rare. The breaking up of estates to meet the demands of an importunate Treasury is everywhere proceeding rapidly, and the successors of the old owners are actuated by motives that differ fundamentally from those of Archdeacon Grantly. If they are farmers who have bought the land they once rented, shortage of capital with which to promote a competitive agriculture usually prevents the adoption of a long-term policy, and is often the cause of a further disintegration of the property. If they are estate development companies, their one aim is to develop—a word that has come to have a strangely restricted and sinister meaning—and sell. In this way the tradition that has made the English countryside something more than a certain area of land under production is being destroyed, to be replaced by a commercialism which is often adopted with reluctance and a sense of the loss of something valuable, but which, at times, is singularly blatant and unashamed.

Before the tradition is altogether lost it may be worth while to ask whether it is necessary or salutary that it should vanish completely. We are living in a period of transition, and wisdom demands that we should be more concerned with the creation of a new order than with the salvaging of the old. Nevertheless it is also wise to consider whether it is not possible for something of the old tradition to survive. The question is, can the outlook that has hitherto belonged to a small and privileged section of the community be absorbed, and at the same time broadened and deepened, by the community as a whole? Before we can answer this question it will be necessary to examine the tradition and decide, if possible, what are its essentials.

For our purpose it is not necessary to go any further back than the beginning of the eighteenth century, for it was during that century that a revolution was almost everywhere brought about in the appearance of the countryside. We may remind

ourselves that a great deal of the country (though by no means the whole of it) was at that time cultivated according to the old common-field system of agriculture. Great wide windy stretches of open arable land, of which, on an average, one-third lay fallow every year, were common features of the midland landscape. Much more land than at present was subject to flooding, and there were large areas even in the lowlands of unreclaimed common, untidy with gorse and bramble, or covered with heath. Throughout later medieval times, and down to the end of the seventeenth century, the woodlands had been progressively denuded of timber, until little but coppice remained, and that in many districts was scarce. Roads were bad in summer and sometimes impassable in winter, and the villages were often miserable collections of mean hovels. Indeed the whole landscape reflected the slow, wasteful, and unenterprising character of the agriculture of the period. Even in the enclosed districts of the south-east, south-west, and north things were little better, and, in spite of the individual methods of cultivation made possible by enclosure, the old systems of cropping still prevailed. The transformation that has since taken place was due almost entirely to the efforts of the landowning class.

In the first place these efforts were directed towards the improvement of production, and, through the improvement of production, the increase of rents. For reasons that were mainly political the court and capital had few attractions for the majority of English country gentlemen of the eighteenth century, and circumstances were therefore favourable for the development of a type of country life that was without counterpart anywhere else in Europe. Jethro Tull, whose experiments in the drilling of wheat at the beginning of the eighteenth century eventually revolutionized English farming, explained in the preface of his book on *Horse-hoeing Husbandry* that it was the necessity of finding occupation for the long winter evenings, when he was virtually a prisoner on his estate, that first turned his mind to the problems of agricultural improvement. Tull's experience was shared by many, among whom it is

perhaps only necessary to mention the great Lord Townshend, whose quarrel with Walpole and consequent withdrawal from politics proved extremely beneficial to his Norfolk estates, if not, as one must suppose was the opinion of Walpole, to the nation: for it is recorded that Townshend succeeded, by his experiments, in effecting a tenfold increase in the rent of some of his land.

This remarkable increase in value was largely due to the enclosure of rough grazing land that had hitherto been useful only for sheep-walks, and to the introduction of what came to be known as the Norfolk system of cropping. It is a noteworthy fact that the estates of most of the great landowners who came into prominence in the eighteenth century were situated on land that had previously been of little value for agriculture—on the sandy heaths of Norfolk, the limestone uplands of the north, or the ancient forest lands of Nottinghamshire—and therefore included a large proportion of open common pasture. The enclosure of such land was less strongly resisted than that of the great open common fields of the midlands, where every available piece of land was under plough, and where the common pasture was so restricted that the tenants' right of pasture on the fallow field was of particular importance. The midlands therefore remained open when all around them land that had escaped the zeal of the Tudor enclosers was rapidly being divided into neat square fields with quick hedges or stone walls.

But even in the midlands it was not long before the dead weight of conservatism was moved by the spirit of the times. The old system of cultivating—generally two crops and a fallow, according to the rule of the village—left no opportunity for the introduction of new crops by the more energetic members of the community. The landowner himself was unable to alter this state of affairs, and since the demesne land was often intermingled with that of the customary tenants, he could not even indulge in experiments on his own land without the consent of the whole village. All the time he was no doubt consumed with envy of the results of enclosure and the

introduction of new crops such as clover and turnips in what now seemed the more fortunate parts of the country. To meet the difficulty the method of enclosure by private Acts of Parliament was introduced, and after the middle of the century hundreds of such Acts were passed by what was virtually a landowners' Parliament. Although these enclosures, which in the space of less than a hundred years changed the face of perhaps a third of England, caused much hardship, there seems to be little doubt that but for the improvement in agricultural method made possible by them the increasing urban population of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries could not have been fed.

There might have been nothing unique about this movement for the improvement of agricultural methods—it was taking place in other countries—if it had not been for the way in which English landowners chose to use the increased revenues they derived from their improved estates. A man may be a good business manager even if he does not live on the job, as is shown by the records in management of some of the Oxford and Cambridge colleges, and other landowning corporations. The fact that the majority of English country gentlemen in the eighteenth century chose, or were constrained, to live on their estates meant that those estates became something more than mere sources of revenue. They became the homes of their owners, and as homes they received the affectionate care that it is not in the nature of the normal human being to bestow upon a collection of leases or share certificates. Because it was his home a man's estate benefited from the surplus of the revenues he took out of it. That is to say the profits of the land were put back into the land; and the important thing is that they were put back partly in the form of essays in the art of rural ornament.

As he rode about his estate the eighteenth-century country gentleman liked to see neat orderly fields well stocked with sheep and cattle or bearing promising crops. These meant prosperity. But he also liked to see shapely clumps of trees growing out of the broad and otherwise uninterrupted undula-

tions of his park and framing the view to and from his house. The view from the house, or prospect, as he would have called it, would be all the better for the inclusion, in the middle distance, of a stretch of ornamental water; and if the distance should consist of agricultural land brought within the scope of his scheme of landscape gardening by the employment of some such device as a ha-ha, he would not be displeased. The vulgar cottages of his tenants might be another matter, and if the village lay inconsiderately across his prospect, he might find it expedient to remove the untidy wattle-and-daub hovels and rebuild them, perhaps to a unified and more substantial design, in a more discreet situation. Thus have Harewood, Milton Abbas, and Lowther, among others, come into existence. As for his own house, that too was frequently found to be in need of remodelling, its Tudor barbarities being replaced by a façade in the correct Palladian manner, where he might be 'proud to catch cold at a Venetian door.'

In all this the eighteenth-century squire was a true child of the Renaissance. The Renaissance may be said to mark a stage in the development of European man's consciousness of his visual environment in which that environment came to be realized as a whole rather than as a collection of unrelated parts.<sup>1</sup> This realization implied a recognition of the possibility of deriving pleasure from the contemplation of the interrelation of the parts, as well as of the individual parts themselves, and provides some explanation of the development of the Renaissance art of planning. In other European countries expression of this new conception of the human environment generally took the form of civic rather than of landscape design, but in England, on account of the peculiar economic and social conditions, civic design was neglected, except in a few places, and the expression of the Renaissance spirit took the form of a glorious blossoming of the art of landscape design, associated with an almost equally noteworthy activity in country house building.

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller development of this idea see Eden (W. A.) 'The English Tradition in the Countryside,' *Architectural Review*, March, 1935.

The development of the art of landscape design in England was associated from first to last with that of Renaissance architecture. With the first glimmer of Renaissance ideas that reached this country in the sixteenth century came the realization of the value of a prospect to and from the house. It probably never occurred to the builders of the Tudor and Elizabethan country houses to make a prospect if one did not already exist, but it is not a long step from the desire to find a site with a prospect to the desire to make one, or to improve one that already exists. When Renaissance architecture reached its period of full and robust life, at the time of the Restoration, landscape gardening was not far behind. At this time the amount of spontaneous woodland in the country had been reduced to a minimum, and the movement for the planting of trees was a natural reaction to the bareness of the countryside. True, the rigid and somewhat pompous avenue style that was then fashionable was unsuited to the small scale of English houses and landscape. Occasionally, as at Cirencester, where radiating avenues centre on the church tower, this type of rural ornament produced some fine effects, but too often the fashion led to ridiculous excesses like those shown in Kip's view of Badminton in the early eighteenth century. This humourless fashion was, however, shortlived, and the reaction against it came naturally as the result of the discovery that the English landscape, as it was beginning to appear in its enclosed state, had in it decorative possibilities of a less formal kind.

The designers who founded the English School of landscape gardening were, indeed, influenced by the paintings of Claude and Poussin, but it is doubtful whether they would have taken the hint if it had not been that hedges and hedgerow planting were already making parks of the enclosed districts. However that may be, the activities of men like Kent, Shenstone, 'Capability' Brown, and Repton, together with a host of amateurs whose work was sometimes among the best of its kind, coincided with the period when the midland counties were being rapidly enclosed by Acts of Parliament. The

theories of these men will perhaps hardly hold water, particularly as they were one and all confused in their ideas about nature, but their practice was one of the principal influences in the formation of the countryside as we now know it. In 1794 Sir Uvedale Price, who was not an admirer of the works of 'Capability' Brown and his imitators, was able to write :

There is no country, I believe, (if we except China) where the art of laying out grounds is so much cultivated as it now is in England. Formerly the embellishments of a place were confined to the garden, or a small space near the mansion; while the park, with all its timber and thickets, was left in a state of wealthy neglect; but now these embellishments extend over a whole district; and . . . give a new and peculiar character to the general face of the country. . . .

When all allowances are made for the generalization, Price's testimony is sufficient to refute the popular idea that the English countryside 'just grewed,' or that it is natural in the most frequent sense of that much-abused word. But it should be noticed that it gives no ground for the idea that has recently found favour among a number of writers on the countryside—that our landscape is a 'designed' landscape, in the sense that parts of Bath or Bloomsbury are designed. Bits of it certainly were designed, for the time being, but it is really impossible to design something that is changing all the time. A much more accurate description of how the countryside came to be what it is to-day would be to say that it was made in much the same way as a good home is made—not with suites of furniture straight from the shop, but by the gradual accretion of good things chosen for their appropriateness by succeeding generations of judicious owners. This process would have been impossible if an estate had been liable to be broken up and redivided with every new generation, and it is for this reason that Archdeacon Grantly's policy of 'keeping it together' has been of particular benefit to the countryside. Fathers built and planted and cared for the land in order that their sons might derive pleasure and profit from their forethought, and the sons passed on the tradition in their turn. In many cases it is only to-day that the full effect of schemes of planting conceived a hundred or a hundred and



fifty years ago can be appreciated. So much may be said for the disinterestedness of the men who made the English countryside.

It is important, too, to notice that the landowner's efforts to create a pleasing environment for himself and his family were of benefit also to his tenants and the inhabitants of the countryside at large. His work in the improvement of his cottage property was no doubt prompted by various motives, one of which was certainly the desire that everything about him should have a pleasing and prosperous appearance. As one of the host of writers on agricultural improvement during the latter part of the eighteenth century put it: '. . . nothing is a greater ornament to a country, or gives more the appearance of comfort or the idea of rural happiness, than a display of neat and decent cottages, built with economy, but with lasting materials.' But if it gave the landowner pleasure to look at 'neat and decent' cottages, it certainly gave his tenants pleasure to live in them, and in these days there are many who live in industrial towns who are not excluded from sharing in the landowner's point of view when they visit the country. Thus may the enlightened self-interest of a small and privileged class living in the midst of the community be of service to the community at large.

The period when this 'spirit of improvement' was abroad in the countryside lasted roughly for about a hundred and fifty years, or from the Revolution to the time of the Reform Bill. It was the period of the landowner's ascendancy in the affairs of the nation. The passing of the Reform Bill marks the end of this state of affairs and the beginning of another. For although in the last years of the eighteenth century and the first three or four decades of the nineteenth century the landowner profited as never before by the growth of the industrial population in the towns, it was this very growth that eventually destroyed the security of his position. The repeal of the Corn Laws shows that cheap food for industrial workers was becoming more important to the nation than high rents for the landowner, and as the century went on the

latter's position and influence were increasingly usurped by the manufacturer. England had ceased to be a predominantly agricultural country, and had become industrialized. The rising population became more and more dependent on imported food for which it paid with the products of its mills and factories, and though English agriculture did not feel the pinch at first, a warning of what was to come was provided by the agricultural depression of the eighties.

The manufacturer was at first quick to learn from the members of the class whose daughters he hoped his sons would marry, but as time went on and he gained the confidence of success he evolved standards of his own. Boulton might live on the threshold of his Soho factory and build what for its time was a model manufacturing village, but his successors eventually seem to have found the smoke and noise of the factory upsetting to their sensibilities. More than a hundred years later it was as a pioneer and philanthropist that Cadbury conceived the project of a model village for his workpeople, and he did not build it outside the gates of his own house even though his industry was comparatively innocuous. In the meantime a system had been evolved in which the environment of the workpeople received no benefit from the profits of their labours. The result was the nineteenth-century town, the evils of which are not by any means being abolished by the present efforts in slum clearance. What wonder that when motor car and motor bus gave a new mobility to the population, the inhabitants of these unwholesome places sought to escape on every possible occasion to a countryside that was as yet reasonably free from the effects of industrialism.

At the same time a century or more of industrial expansion, with its attendant social legislation gained by the votes of the now preponderantly urban population, had succeeded in weakening the position of the landowner and the farmer. Death duties were imposing heavy burdens on the landowner, and English agriculture, always slow to adapt itself to new conditions, was in a bad way. The result was that all England became desirable building land, owing to the great disparity

between the price of agricultural land and that of land for building. There were not lacking people who were ready to take advantage of such conditions, and from being desirable building land an undue proportion of the English countryside has become, in less than twenty short years, very undesirable built-up land. In this roundabout and calamitous way the profits of industry—for it is not for country people, as a rule, that these things are perpetrated—have found their way back to the land, to the destruction of the countryside. Town and country planning has been evolved to regulate the situation, and has failed, mainly because a planning scheme cannot, in equity, deprive a hard-pressed owner of what may be his only hope of remaining solvent—the right to sell his land for building. And yet the townsman loves the country as he has never done before, since he now has the opportunity of knowing it better than he ever did. He needs it as a drowning man needs air. What is the solution?

. . . . .

Other contributors to these pages offer their suggestions for the solution of this problem. I, too, should like to offer mine, using as my text the foregoing brief and generalized account of the work of the landowner in the countryside. Since the landowner is becoming less and less capable of carrying on the tradition, and since such bodies as the National Trust can only, by their nature, act as stewards for comparatively small areas, does it not seem that the only way to ensure that our children and grandchildren shall not be deprived of the benefits of a countryside at least as fine as that which we ourselves inherited is for the community to do for itself what the eighteenth-century landowner did for himself, and indirectly for his tenants and for us? Moreover, if the community had the mind, and the power, to do it, could not the countryside of the future be made even finer than it was before, considering the many resources that science has placed at our disposal for the first time in history? Surely the community must face the issue in this matter, and decide

whether there is wisdom in allowing this national asset to be whittled away in the name of private gain.

I have suggested above that one reason for the distinctive quality of the English countryside in the past was that the profits of the land were put back into the land in the form of embellishments for the pleasure of its owners. England is no longer a predominantly agricultural country, and her highly industrialized state makes it essential that a large part of our foodstuffs should be imported. This would be so even if it were possible to feed the whole of the population on the produce of these islands, unless English manufacturers were willing to forgo the greater part of their export trade. Neither of these conditions of self-sufficiency seems to be possible, even if desirable, and we may therefore take it that the decline in English agriculture is not just a temporary misfortune, but in certain respects is a permanent factor to be reckoned with in the countryside of the future. In this case we cannot look to the landscape's being embellished out of the profits of agriculture. There remain the profits of industry, and it seems to me to be essential to the future well-being of the countryside that some means should be evolved of diverting the profits of industry directly and regularly back to the land. I am assuming that a rural landscape is a thing of value in itself, apart from its productive capacity. The eighteenth-century landowner did not doubt it, since his park was not designed for production, and the modern manufacturer who retires to a country house does not doubt it. Need we, then, doubt the value of the countryside for the community as a whole? To put the question in another way, is not the landscape of recreation every bit as valuable to the nation as the landscape of production? I, for my part, think it is.

This is not to say that we must look forward to a countryside that will be one vast playground. In one way, agricultural production will probably decline, and a quantity of land corresponding to the area now used for growing crops like wheat and sugar beet will perhaps need to be diverted to recreational purposes. On the other hand there are things,

such as milk and dairy produce, fresh meat, fruit and vegetables, that can be produced better in the country where they are to be consumed than anywhere else; and until every man, woman, and child of the population has enough of these things according to the best modern standards of nutrition, it seems unreasonable to call a halt to their production. Even when we take into consideration the probable decline in the population, we still have a long way to go before the desired standard is reached, and the programme will necessitate a very considerable increase in the productive capacity of the land that is devoted to these purposes. Such an increase is possible if the methods of modern scientific agriculture are adopted everywhere.

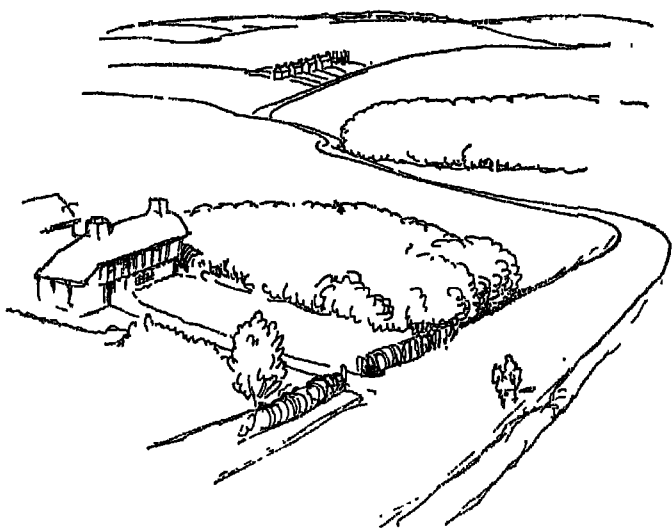
If now we assume that in the future the function of the land will be divided between the production of perishable food-stuffs and the provision of space for the recreation of the urban population, the problem arises as to how it is to be disposed. What is the right sort of general plan for this countryside of the future? It is here that I believe we can learn from the example of the eighteenth-century landowner. When a landowner wished to create for himself a pleasant environment he did not make a park on the opposite side of his estate from his house so that he could visit it on Sunday afternoons. He put it all round his house, so that it became an extension of his home—a part of his permanent everyday environment. In my opinion it would be well if we could learn to look at our towns and cities in much the same way as the eighteenth-century landowners regarded their houses, as the focal points in a series of recreational landscapes, beyond which would lie the market gardens, orchards, pastures, meadows, and arable fields forming the landscape of production. In other words I should like to see every town and city in the land surrounded by a broad strip of park land in which the inhabitants could regularly gain the necessary relaxation from an urban environment. I assume that this urban environment would itself be remodelled to provide ample open space within its boundaries, together with easy means of egress for the population to the surrounding park land.

For the park land itself, I must explain that I do not mean a series of municipal parks surrounded by iron railings, or, worse still, tucked away behind a profitable building depth at the instigation of a soulless Ministry of Health. Nor do I mean a green belt a mcagre half-mile in width, beyond which the town can spread in uncontrolled confusion as before. I mean real park land extending to a width of several miles in the case of some of the largest towns. For London as it is the open land still remaining within a radius of thirty miles from Charing Cross would scarcely be large enough, though it might for a remodelled London. Hedges and buildings, except such as are necessary for the purposes of the parks, would be removed so that the population could roam freely about. Villages would perhaps have to undergo a certain change of function, since their original purpose would be gone with the fields that were cultivated by their inhabitants. But the change would not be so great as when a village is engulfed by the oncoming tide of suburbia. For the land included in such park belts would not be removed altogether from production. Here is the chance for a better type of afforestation than can be carried out on the poor soils of hill districts or on sandy heathland, and accommodation for foresters would need to be found in the village. The grassland, besides, would be useful for the grazing of sheep, and houses would be required for the shepherds. Thus these belts of park land would still retain an essentially rural population. Moreover these activities would add interest to the land from the point of view of the townsman, just as a herd of grazing cattle, diplomatically grouped in one of Repton's sketches, was considered an indispensable adjunct to a gentleman's park. In addition there would be playing-fields and swimming-pools with their pavilions and dressing-rooms, together with hostels and refreshment places for the urban holiday makers. The planting of trees and the provision of buildings and roads would all have to conform to finely conceived schemes of landscape gardening, which, to be suitable, would have to have a certain flexibility.

It is my opinion that if our towns were in themselves decent, and if they were provided with a girdle of recreational land in some such manner as I have suggested, this would in itself go a long way towards satisfying the thirst for a pleasing environment that sends townsmen hurrying in their thousands to the regular beauty spots. There will still, however, remain some need for complete change, and to satisfy such a need I would advocate the establishment of national parks in places like the Lake District. I think, however, that it is necessary to realize that these places would indeed be parks, and that their primary purpose would be for the recreation of the people. For this reason they should be made easy of access, and should be provided with adequate up-to-date accommodation for the housing and amusement of visitors. The pretence that the Lake District is a remote corner of the country in which people may escape for a short space from the effects of industrialism is surely false when any fine week-end in summer some of the fell paths are as crowded as the field paths within a few miles of Liverpool or Manchester. Is it not better, in an industrialized country, to make the effects of industrialism such that escape from them will be unnecessary? And if the feeling of real remoteness still remains a necessity to a minority of rare spirits, have not modern methods of transport rendered accessible to them, with as little trouble as was met by Dr. Johnson in making his journey to the Western Highlands, the silent places of the Himalayas or the Poles? An artificially guarded remoteness seems but a hollow sort of jest.

Finally, what of the means by which these things may be brought about? I assume that it will be necessary for the development of both town and countryside to be controlled by some sort of National Planning Commission working on the results of a scientific survey of the resources of the land. But, it may be objected, the town and country planning schemes that are being prepared by the local authorities are doing little to create a desirable new environment for the community; is there any guarantee that national planning could do more? The answer seems to be that it could not,

unless it were granted certain fundamental conditions in which to work. One of these seems to be that the profits of industry should be capable of being diverted back to the land not in a haphazard fashion, but according to plan. I suggest that another is that a man's livelihood should not have to depend on his ownership of a particular piece of land. The condition that enabled the eighteenth-century landowner to create a pleasing environment for himself was that he owned both the land that became his park, and the productive land out of which he drew the money needed to pay for his projects. If now the community is to carry on the tradition for itself may we not say that the same condition still holds, with the difference that a mechanized industry, out of which much greater profits may be made, has been added to the means of production?





# *The People's Claim*

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C. E. M. JOAD

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WHAT follows is divided into three parts. First, there is a confession of faith, that the people's claim upon the English countryside is paramount, with the grounds for it; secondly, a demonstration of fact, that the people are not as yet ready to take up their claim without destroying that to which the claim is laid; thirdly, a conclusion, that the English countryside must be kept inviolate as a trust until such time as they *are* ready, and that it is the duty of the readers no less than of the writers of this book, together with such others as can be brought to realize their responsibility in the matter, to act in the interim as the people's trustees, with the corollaries in the way of legislation and administration that this conclusion entails.

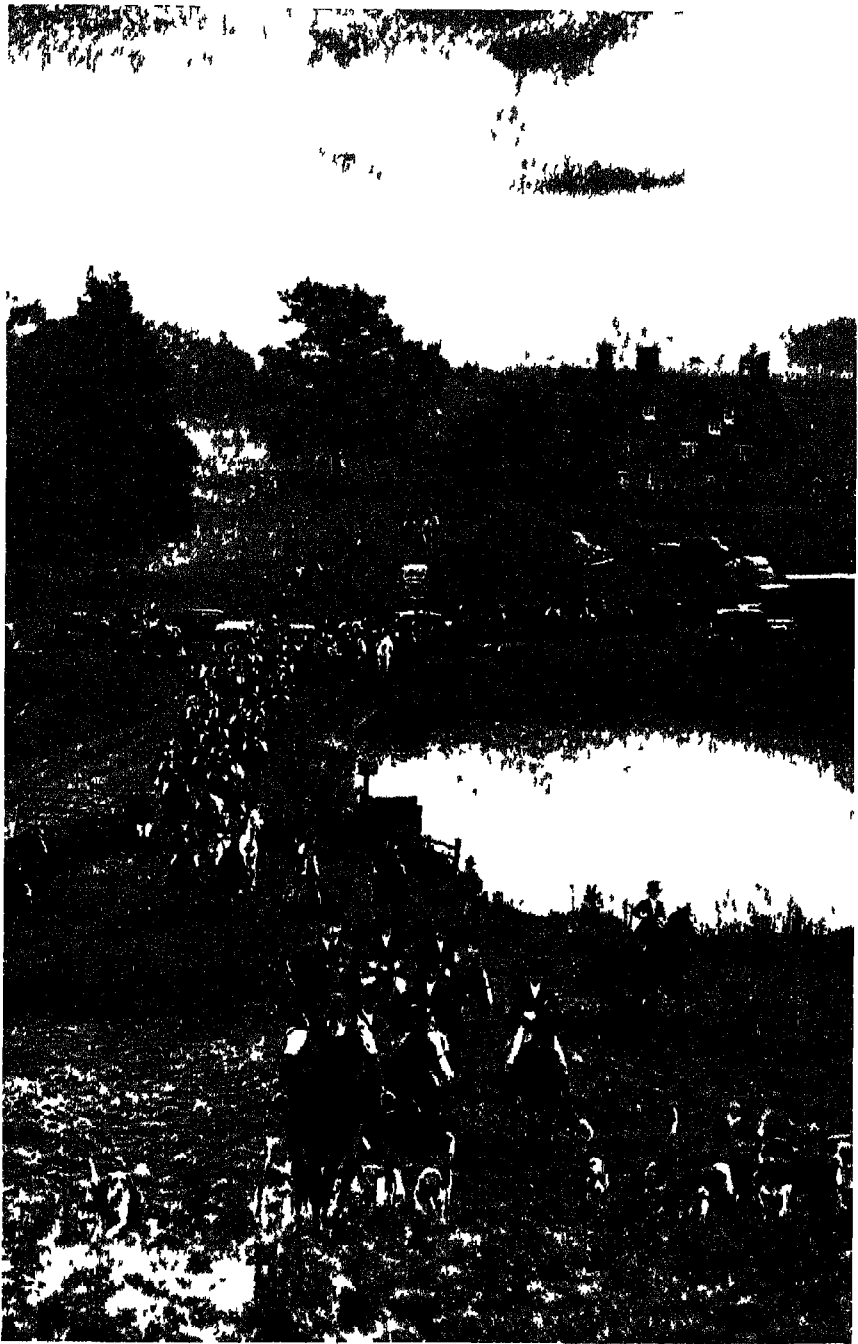
## I

### THAT THE PEOPLE'S CLAIM IS PARAMOUNT

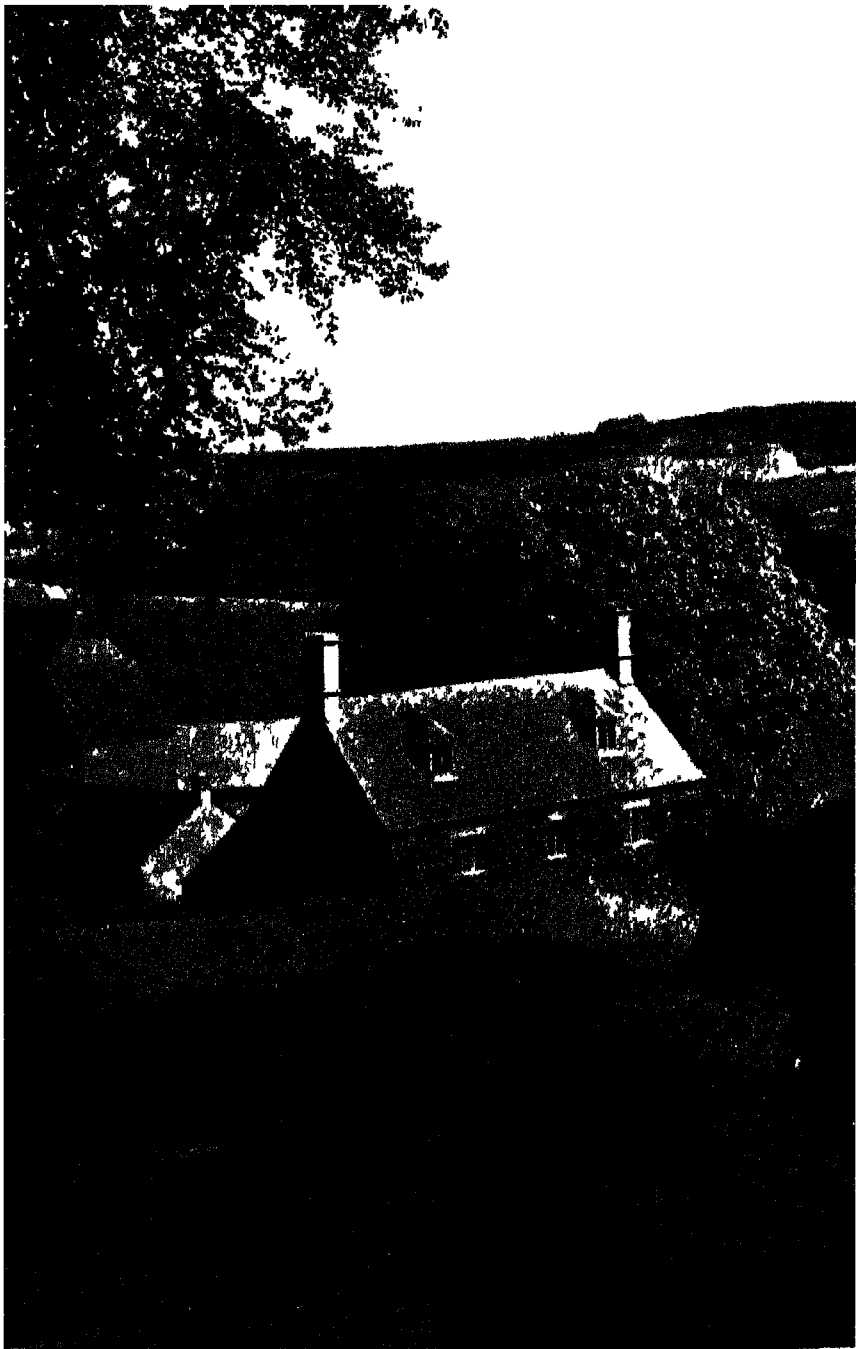
I begin, then, by insisting that the interest of the people in the English countryside and their consequent claim upon it are paramount. They are, therefore, more important than the interest and the claim of farmers, landowners, or sportsmen. On what grounds does this contention rest?

#### *The Making of Whole Men and Women*

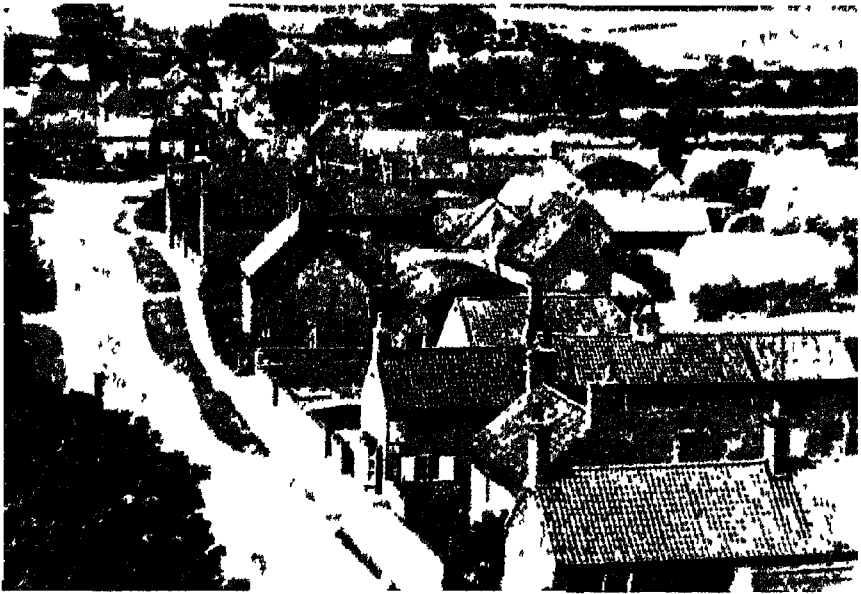
Our generation has seen a revolution in the conception of education. The revolution springs from two realizations. In the first place, it is realized that one of the objects of education is to enable us to develop our latent potentialities, to extend our capacities to the full, to become all that we have



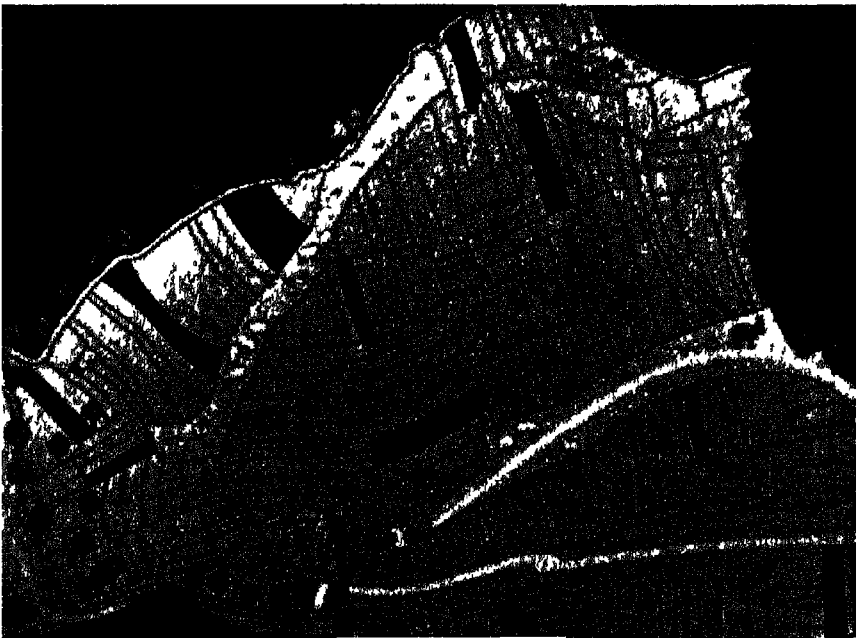
*The only country pageant which is not a revival.*



*Traditional England—Charlton Abbots in the Cotswolds.*



*Laxton in Nottinghamshire, our only surviving un-enclosed village. The rick-yards behind the clustered farm-houses open on to the still unfenced fields. The old map of the place shows ten scattered holdings.*



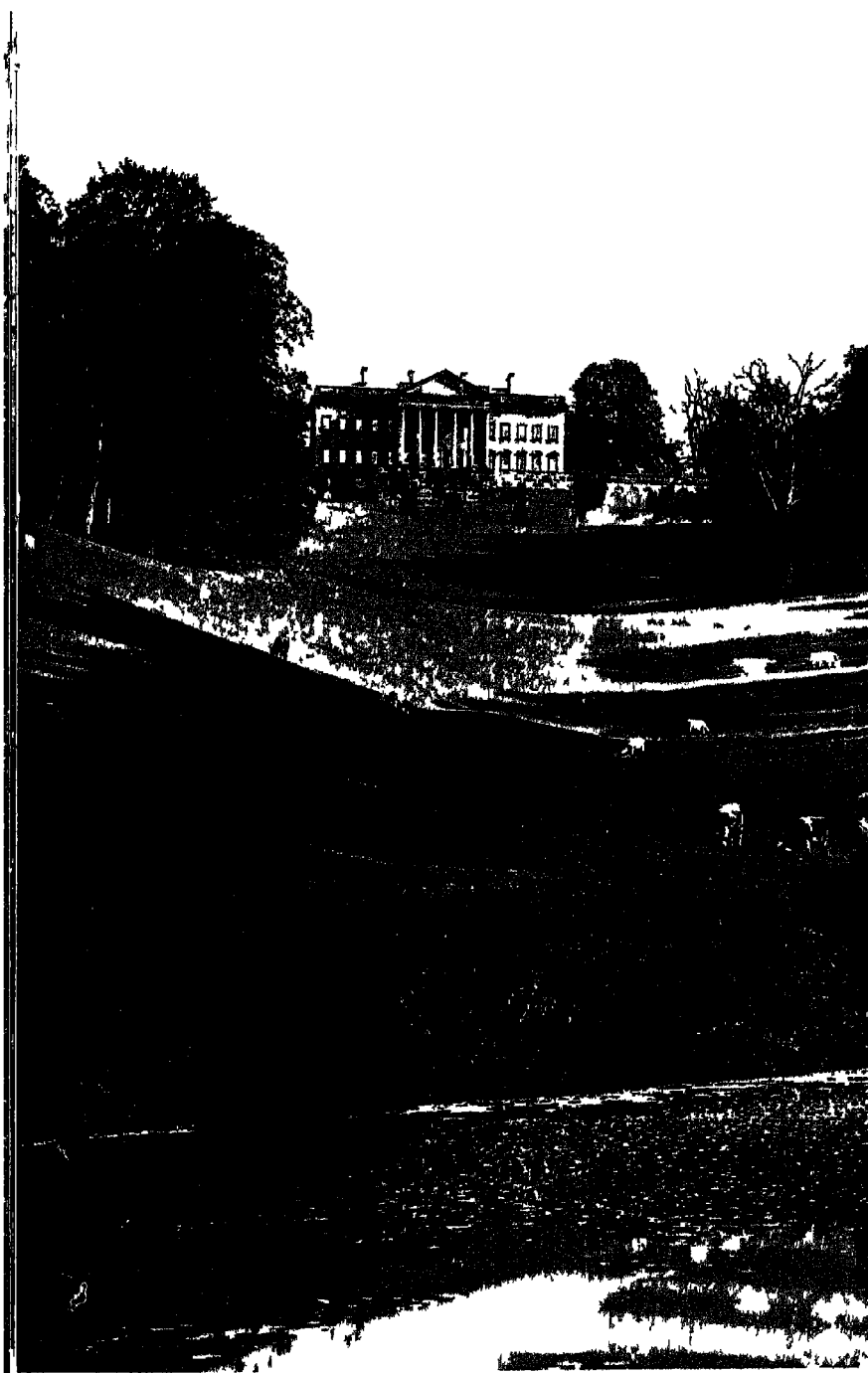


*Downland*



*From the top of the Church Tower Newington Kent*



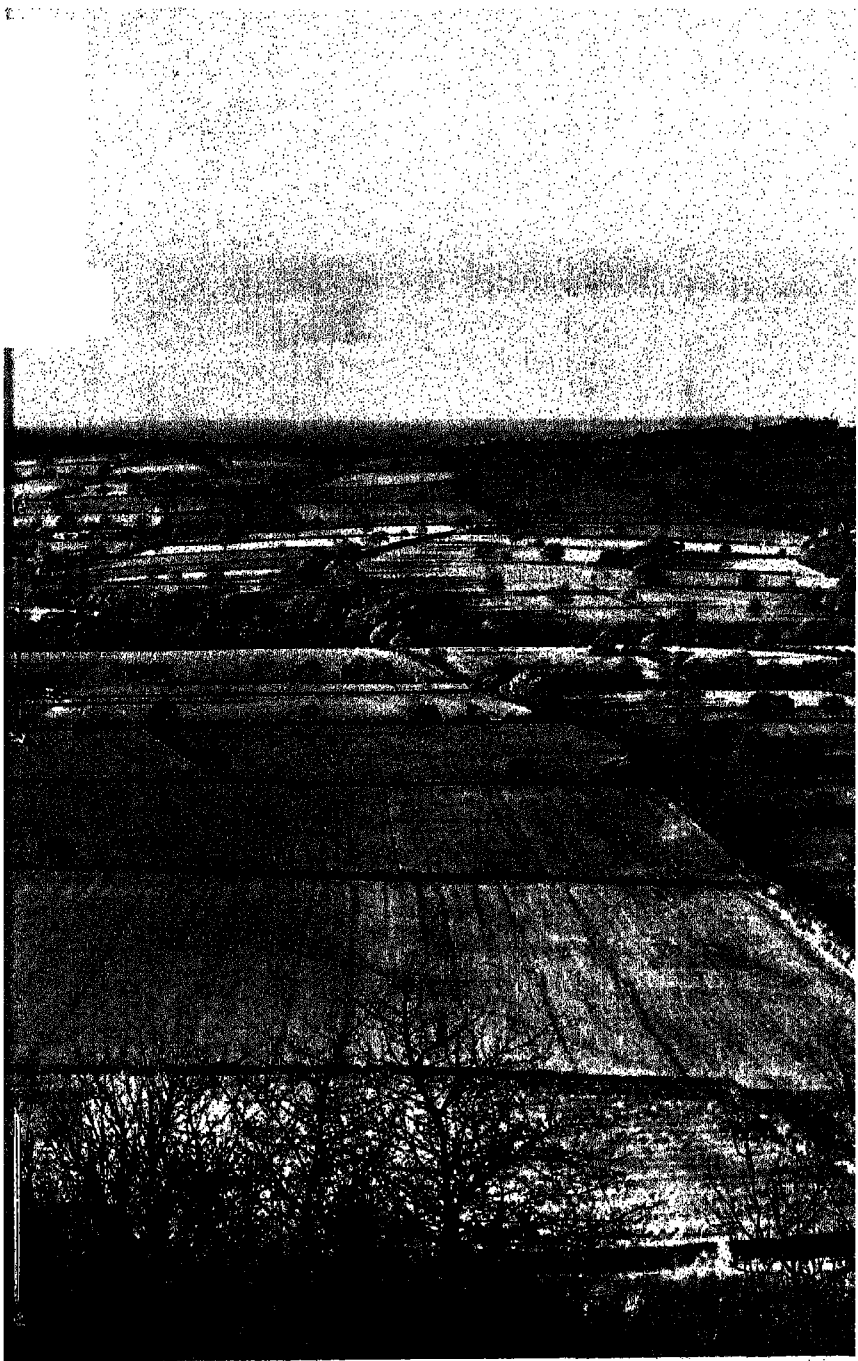


*Deane Dusk Rath*





*From Wenlock Edge looking over*



*Shropshire to the Welsh border.*



## VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

I. c. 2000 B.C. A countryside consisting of wide stretches of woodland, heather, and fern. The river valley is a swamp, and the forest dreary and unkempt. A gravel terrace in the middle distance is perhaps soon to become the site of a village.



II. c. A.D. 1100. The woodland has been cleared from the gravel terrace. A village of wattle and daub hovels, set in the midst of open fields, clusters round the new Norman church. Beyond the edge of the clearing the woodland still covers the wide area.



III. c. A.D. 1600. The fields have been extended, the houses re-built and the church re-modelled. An Elizabethan manor-house, with formal garden, stands opposite the church. All around, where once was woodland, is open common pasture, with only a small area of coppice wood in the foreground. The scale is large and the views wide.



IV. c. A.D. 1800. Common and coppice woods have been converted into a park, surrounding a strict Palladian mansion. The river is widened into an ornamental lake. The fields have been enclosed, and hedgerow trees help to clothe the landscape. Again the village has been rebuilt. The scale is intimate and the views less extensive.



*A Roman Street, with new Cotswold cottages and the*

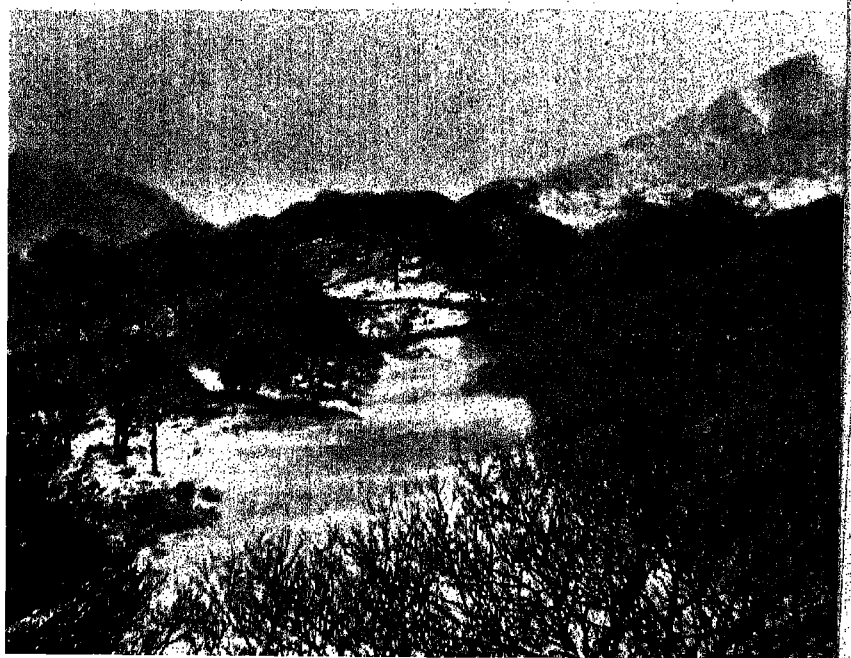


*Emral Hall, Flintshire. Recently restored, but now completely demolished.*





*(Above) Coniston lake and (below) Snowdonian foot-hills.*





*Cornell Medical Centre. N.Y.*



*Old and new in North Wales. The old condemned by the local authority ; the new officially approved.*







*'This other Eden*

it in us to be. In this full development of personality the culture of the body as well as the mind must play its part, and to the culture of the body familiarity with nature in walking and riding, in swimming and climbing, is an essential contribution. Confined in towns we need the country to enable us to develop to the full the individualities that ours might be. Too often we need it to enable us to recover the individualities that once were ours.

To the defects of a lop-sided intellectualism our generation is increasingly sensitive. We have grasped the truth that if we are to become whole men and women we need, concurrently with the growth of intellect, a parallel development of feeling, of emotion, and of aesthetic insight. Whence can we derive this all-round education, an education alike of body, of mind, and of spirit, so happily as from nature? The feeling of the air upon the skin, of the sun upon the face; the tautening of the muscles in our legs as we climb; rough weather to give us strength, blue skies and golden hours of sunlight—these things enrich every aspect of our being. Yet these things are country things, nor, if the country be taken from us, can our education be completed.

### *The Leisure of the Present*

Secondly, we are coming increasingly to realize the importance of so educating people that they may tolerate their leisure without becoming a misery to themselves and a nuisance to others. There is, in fact, a demand for education for leisure. It is, alas, sufficiently obvious that we do not at present know how to occupy our spare time. The most generally accepted conception of leisure-spending is that of paying money to be amused, which means that we hire somebody else to do for us the entertaining which we are unable to do for ourselves. As an alternative, we whack little round bits of matter with long thin ones in the shape of bats, mallets, clubs, sticks, rackets, and cues—a process known as playing games. Or we go and kill something. Lacking the money for entertainment and the energy for

games, we lie upon the beach at Margate or Southend, throw pebbles at tin cans, and find fault with our wives because they possess neither the youth nor the contours of the film stars over whose sexual attractions we smack our lips at the cinemas. These pursuits are at present endured with tolerable equanimity, because we most of us suffer from overwork and have only a week or a fortnight in which to endure them. To the working, and still more to the over-working, man, leisure, however spent, is a good; but, given existing conceptions of leisure-using, absence of employment produces after a certain point a diminishing return of happiness. Assuming that our civilization survives, the economic and industrial conditions under which our children will live will be very different from those that at present obtain. Let us suppose that the present economic corner has been turned, that some method has been devised for distributing to all human beings the commodities so embarrassingly showered upon us by the productivity of our machines, and that the material needs of the next generation are satisfied, as they might well be to-day, by a comparatively restricted period of daily machine-minding on the part of each citizen. We may, then, on this assumption, look forward to a society in which most men are assured of comfort and a competence in return for some three or four hours' machine-minding a day. How will these newly enfranchized citizens of the kingdom of leisure pass their time? It is not difficult to answer.

### *Leisured Citizens of the Future*

To hit balls with pieces of wood, or to kick them with leather boots, or more frequently to watch other people hitting or kicking them; to kill birds and animals; to amble slowly over glazed floors to the strains of negroid music; to lunch in London and dine in Paris—these for the governing-class Westerner constitute the pursuits of the good life. A life which embodied them uninterruptedly would, he considers, be perfect. Who can doubt that the working and middle classes of the Western world, endowed with the same opportunities, would utilize them in the same way? Inevitably, since they

are dominated by the same conception of the good life. What will an England of leisure-users inspired by these ideals be like? Agriculture being no longer pursued, the lovely pattern of ploughland, meadowland, and moorland will have vanished. The face of England will be covered with a network of roads upon which stationary cars will snort in the impotence of an inextricable jam, and studded with roadhouses and country clubs complete with golf courses, tennis courts, or whatever kind of ground the popular game of the future demands. The coast will be ringed with a continuous series of 'resorts' at which jazz bands will break into outbursts of syncopated sound for the benefit of tired sportsmen and their over-nourished wives. A deluge of news warranted not to arouse thought and carefully bowdlerized of any items likely to excite comment will descend upon the defenceless heads of the community by means of every device of television and telephotonny that the science of the future may have been able to perfect. Inevitably, the civilized mind revolts from such a prospect. How is its realization to be avoided?

It can be avoided only if people are educated in the right use of their leisure, and it is upon the right use of leisure that the widened conception of education, whose outlines we are only now beginning dimly to discern, insists.

#### *Education in the Appreciation of Beauty*

What form, then, should education for the vastly increased leisure that the citizens of this country will enjoy in the not distant future assume? The answer to this question is not easy, nor can it even begin to be given here. One thing, however, seems reasonably certain. It must contain provision for training people in the recognition and appreciation of those things which are permanently valuable. What are these? Beauty, truth, and goodness is the traditional answer. Of truth and goodness this is not the place to speak, but a word on beauty would not be irrelevant. To learn to know beauty is to make an investment whose dividends in terms of pleasure grow ever greater as life proceeds. For the appreciation

of beauty, unlike the gratification of the senses, is an appetite which grows by what it feeds on. As we grow older, it is in the gradual widening and deepening of our perception and appreciation of beauty that we find compensation for the waning of our physical powers, the weakening of emotional intensity, the loss of gusto and zest in life. The impulses that demand beauty in life may, then, be safely followed. They will not dry up and leave us stranded, nor, like will-o'-the-wisps, drag us into the morass of dullness and leave us bogged in boredom. Now these impulses are satisfied by the beauty of nature no less than by that of art. Hence, whatever else education for leisure may involve, it should include as an essential element a training in the love and appreciation of natural beauty.

It is to my mind one of the most hopeful and significant signs of our generally depressing times that the impulse to seek the knowledge of beauty in nature has, in these latter years, sprung up, as it were spontaneously, in thousands of young men and women. If the community will not educate them for leisure, they are at least trying to educate themselves. Hence the importance in contemporary civilization of the townsman's discovery of the country. It is not only because the life of the town-dweller starved of beauty derives the nourishment that it needs from nature, that the country is the most potent liberator from man's modern enslavement to gadgets and machines, that country sights and sounds are the best cures for the neuroses of the mind, as fresh air and exercise are the saving antidotes against ailments of the body, that freedom, physical movement, and the stimulating self-help of open-air life are the best aids to jolly companionships, so that a man will know his friend better after a week in the country than after a year in the town—it is not, I say, only because of these things, important as they are, that we should welcome the coming of the townsman into the country; it is, in the last resort, because the capacity to enjoy natural loveliness, to delight in earth and water and sun and air, is one of the final tests by which the value of a man's life is to be judged.

*The First Claimants upon England*

There is to-day a new fullness and sincerity in the gusto of man's approach to nature. No one could have watched the hikers, the Scouts, the Guides, and the campers during the blazing days of the glorious summers of 1934 and 1935 without realizing in them a nearer approach than most of us have achieved to the secret of happiness. Much has yet to be done before the beauty of England can be preserved as a secure possession for our descendants; still more before its spaciousness can be organized, as it should be, for the good of the people as a whole. But, if our belief in the claims of the spirit, in the value of an all-round personal and cultural development, in the permanent importance of right leisure-using and the resultant necessity of education for leisure, has any content and meaning, then we shall see in the English countryside not only a possession of beauty which, having inherited from the past, we are morally bound to hand down to posterity undefiled, but an instrument, the most important we possess, for the training of the citizens of the future in the art of right living.

*Corollaries. Sport and Farming*

Up to the present I have been concerned to enunciate certain general principles which seem to me to be self-evident. If they are accepted, a number of conclusions which might otherwise seem shocking must be accepted in their train. The first is that to this need of the townsman for the country and to his right for its satisfaction every other interest must yield. There must yield, for example, the interest of the sportsman. There are many persons belonging to the unemployed rich class, whose conception of the good life consists in depriving other creatures of life. That the desire of 'sportsmen' to insert pieces of metal from a distance into the bodies of grouse and pheasants should be permitted to prevent citizens as a whole from walking on moors and in woods seems to me offensive to morals and repugnant to common

sense. I profess myself totally unable to see any reason why the gratification of the tastes of a few rich men should be allowed to obstruct those pursuits of the many which, if I am right, constitute an integral part of the physical and psychological well-being of the community.

That the claim of the farmer should also yield to that of the townsman seems *prima facie* a more dubious contention. Nevertheless, in those cases in which the two claims conflict—and they are, I conceive, few—the townsman, I still insist, has the greater right. The days of farming in England, in so far as farming means arable farming able to stand on its own unsubsidized legs, are past. In spite of all that governments may be prepared to do for him, the English wheat-grower cannot in the long run hope to compete with the giant farms and mammoth production of Russia and Canada. This statement is no doubt highly controversial, but I cannot presume to enter the controversy. I refer those who question it to Mr. Street's admirable books. Arable farming in England is a luxury pursuit which is artificially encouraged for political and military reasons. The fact that farming is artificially propped up is no reason for allowing it to fall. So far from letting it fall, I would add reasons of amenity to those of State—the English country without its ploughed fields would be the play without Hamlet—and maintain the work of the farm as an integral part of that unique blend of the labours of God and man which is the English countryside. But farming which is maintained for reasons of amenity must, when interests conflict, yield to the seekers for amenity. As I have said, I think they should conflict but rarely. Citizens educated in rural lore, as I should hope to educate them, will not want to walk through fields of corn or to leave behind them a trail of open gates. But some modification of trespassing prohibitions there will no doubt have to be.

## II

## THAT THE PEOPLE ARE NOT YET READY

*The Soul and its Environment*

I come now to my demonstration of fact. Whatever be the claims of townsmen in relation to the countryside, they are not yet ready or able to exercise their rights without damaging that to which they lay claim. It is, indeed, only too likely that, surveying the effects of the twentieth-century invasion of England, our posterity will be provoked to remark that it is only such peoples as do not love the countryside that are likely to retain a countryside worth loving. For at the moment the townsman let loose upon the country is from the point of view of utility a liability, and from that of amenity a blight.

The fact should not occasion surprise. For what, after all, does the reader, whose education, at this point, I propose to take in hand, expect? Let him, then, first read the *Republic* of Plato—it will be good for him in any event and quite independently of the special purpose that has caused me to recommend it—and there learn how the soul of man is wax to take the impression of its environment. Let a boy grow to manhood among beautiful sights, harmonious sounds, and just institutions, and his soul will give forth beauty, harmony, and justice. Let him grow up in the midst of brutality and violence, among squalid sights and ugly sounds, and he will be unjust and violent in his dealings, his soul will give forth ugliness, and he will not know how to come to terms with gentleness and beauty. Brutality and violence are not as a general rule the normal environment of the average English boy; not, at any rate, as yet. But touching ugly sights and sounds, I would ask the reader to go and look at Rotherham or Manchester or Newcastle or Hull or Leytonstone or Camberwell or Reading, to look and to listen, and when he has had his fill of the dirt and the stench and the foul air and the overcrowding and the hideous buildings and shattering racket of these places, I shall be unable to deny myself the pleasure



of again putting to him the question: 'What do you expect?' You pen a people for centuries in mean houses and squalid streets. Do you expect them to be at their ease in woods and green fields? You debar them, generation after generation, from every sight and sound of nature. Do you expect them to know how to treat her? You bring men and women up in an environment of ugliness. Do you expect them to come easily to terms with beauty? If you do, you are exceedingly unreasonable. Very well, then, let not the townsman's outrages upon good taste and good behaviour provoke you into forgetting the general principles which I have ventured to set forth.

### *The Townsman outrages the Country*

Of the extent and ferocity of these outrages nobody is more sensible than myself. Nobody deplores more heartily the open gates for the losing of cattle and the broken bottles for their laming. Nobody dislikes more heartily the scurf of litter—that grimy visiting-card which democracy, now on calling terms with the country, insists on leaving after each visit. I have seen Sennen Cove in Cornwall of an evening so covered with paper after the last of the charabanc parties have left, that those ignorant of the tastes and habits of Englishmen on a holiday would have imagined a convulsion of nature in the shape of a summer snowstorm. Nobody is more furiously indignant than I at the destruction of daffodils, the uprooting of primroses, the bundles of drooping bluebells that ride mournfully home on people's handlebars or carriers after a day in the country in springtime.

And then there are the hordes of hikers cackling insanely in the woods, or singing raucous songs as they walk arm in arm at midnight down the quiet village street. There are people, wherever there is water, upon sea shores or upon river banks, lying in every attitude of undressed and inelegant squalor, grilling themselves, for all the world as if they were steaks, in the sun. There are tents in meadows and girls in pyjamas dancing beside them to the strains of the gramophone, while

stinking disorderly dumps of tins, bags, and cartons bear witness to the tide of invasion for weeks after it has ebbed; there are fat girls in shorts, youths in gaudy ties and plus-fours, and a roadhouse round every corner and a café on top of every hill for their accommodation.

### *Motorists in the Country*

Above all and most hated of all, there are the motorists, who, having turned the roads of this country into maelstroms of destruction, have now, in their desperate eagerness to get away from one another, invaded the by-roads and lanes, where they are to be seen on banks and commons, picnicking determinedly in the shadow of their cars, inhaling oil and petrol and extracting music from machines. The motorist is worse than the hiker because he devastates a wider area. Of recent years there has grown up a school of writers whose object it is to tell motorists how to escape from other motorists. Ruthlessly Sunday after Sunday they write articles whose purpose it is to direct motorists from the country which they have already polluted to the undiscovered country which they have yet to pollute. And, inevitably, the process defeats its own end. By dint of commending motorists to a particular road because it is quiet, unspoilt and unvisited by other motorists, you cause it to lose all those qualities for which you commended it. You praise it because it takes you to the forgotten heart of the English countryside. And when, as a result of your praise, sufficient numbers of motorists have found it, the heart stops beating.

The motorist straying off the main roads is driven by the need to escape from modern civilization. He is a man seeking to withdraw himself, in quest, though he may not know it, of a retreat bathed in an atmosphere, the fragrance that is distilled by old and traditional things. He finds it, but only for a moment, for, in the act of finding, he transforms it into something other than what he sought. It is a lane, say, leading to a village; yet scarcely has he passed that way, when

the lane is widened to accommodate him. Each year the banks are cut back, the hedges trimmed, the edges tidied. Presently the native surface which reproduced the colour and characteristics of the soil disappears beneath a coat of tar, and the transformation from a lane into a road is complete. Worse than the motorist in a lane is the motorist on a down. I have seen one on the very day on which I am writing this. He had driven tempestuously up to the very top of Amberley Down and there he sat with his girl in his little metal box listening to the fat-stock prices on the wireless. I asked him why he had driven in a machine to the top of Amberley Down in order to listen to the fat-stock prices. His surprise at the question left him speechless, so I took his number, promised to report him to the police, and walked away cursing him.

No, the fact must be admitted, the townsman, taken by and large, does not as yet know how to behave in the country or to commune with beauty without destroying it. Yet does the fact afford a reason for excluding him from woods and fields, for debarring him from nature, for denying him access to beauty? I think that it does not, unless the vulgarity of the gutter press is also a ground for refusing to teach him to read. We deplore, do we not? the vulgarity of our Sunday papers, nor can we avoid recognizing that they have come into being to cater for the tastes of untrained and uneducated readers. Yet we do not propose their suppression. We hope, rather, so to improve people's taste by education that they will insist on demanding something better.

### *Good Manners not Instinctive, but Acquired*

The analogy suggests that the misbehaviour of people in the country is not a ground for refusing them access. It is a ground rather for making access easier, in order that they may the more quickly learn to treat the country better. Good taste and good behaviour are not things instinctive, but acquired, and the only way to acquire them is to enjoy opportunities for their exercise. Nothing, I am convinced,

will arrest the influx of the people into the country, and nothing, if I am right, can avail to arrest the vulgarization we deplore. On the contrary, as more and more people unversed in nature invade it from charabanc, car, and train, the position will grow worse. But, if we have any trust in the fundamental decency of human beings, any faith in the power of nature over the human spirit, any belief in the ability of mankind to respond to beauty, it will grow worse only that it may grow better. It is our business to see to it that no act of ours hastily born of a natural indignation at seeing nature outraged and beauty ravished shall retard the process, or make the townsman's new effort to come to terms with the countryside more difficult than it might have been.

Let us not, then, be blinded by a just indignation at present excesses into taking a view of human nature which despairs of the ability of ordinary men and women ever to make contact with beauty without destroying it, and which overlooks the plain lesson of the past, that the only way to create good taste and good manners is to provide occasions for their exercise and to persist in providing them in spite of their being abused. The people, I admit, are not yet ready to take advantage of the country, but we are not entitled, therefore, wholly to restrict their access. On the contrary, we must recognize that the position must be worse before it is better, and that the quickest way to reach the stage when it will be better is to hurry on and hurry through the inevitable period when it will be worse.

### III

#### THAT THE COUNTRY MUST BE KEPT IN TRUST

##### *The Right of Immediate Access*

This brings me to my conclusion, that it is our business to maintain, so far as in us lies, and to rouse the public conscience to the need of maintaining, the beauty of the English countryside as a trust bequeathed to us by our ancestors to be preserved and handed down inviolable to our posterity. This

trust we have no more right to squander in pursuit of private profit or trivial amusement than the trustees of an estate have a right to appropriate to their own purposes the funds committed to their charge. I suggest that in the light of the particular situation in which we find ourselves the adequate discharge of this trust entails action along three lines.

First, we must give to the people as a whole such opportunities of access to their heritage as are not incompatible with its maintenance and we must give these opportunities now. That people can only acquire good taste in art by virtue of continuous intercourse with beautiful things, that they can only acquire a palate for food and drink by virtue of constantly tasting carefully arranged dishes and carefully chosen wines, that they can only acquire an appetite for the joys of mental adventure and the life of the mind by virtue of unrestricted access to all that great men have thought and said memorably about the conduct of life, the destiny of man, and the nature of things—all this most of us are prepared to concede. Similarly, I would suggest, men and women will only learn to treat nature properly, to be at home in nature, and to make the most of all that nature has to give, if they have access to nature in all her forms and in all her moods.

### *Roads and Trespassers*

This is at present very far from being granted. The movement of return to nature is, it is generally admitted, one of the most distinctive of our times. Hiking has replaced beer as the shortest cut out of Manchester, and turning their backs upon the agglomeration of mean buildings, miscalled towns, with which the nineteenth century covered the north of England and the twentieth century is covering the south, men and women go every week by the thousand and the hundred thousand into the country. Yet where are they to go? To walk on the roads is manifestly impossible. Apart from the racket, the stench, the constant chivving by infuriated motorists and the general sense of unrest, the scenery of

the main roads, composed, as it increasingly is, of staring villas, bungalows, hoardings, petrol pumps, and notice boards, exasperates and unsettles the mind no less than its traffic endangers the body. The roads are not country at all; they are little ribbons of town thrusting ever farther into the heart of England.

The new army of walkers cannot, then, march along the roads, since walking on the roads no longer satisfies any of the needs which impel the town-dweller to seek the country. If the walker leaves the road and walks across country, he finds the countryside barred and fenced against him. In the south the woods are increasingly preserved for the shooting of pheasants; in the north the moors are sacred to the destroyer of grouse. As agriculture declines over large areas of England, the farmer is being increasingly replaced by the keeper, and the keeper is a worse friend to the walker than the farmer. Moreover, both landowners and farmers, alarmed by the increasing number of walkers, are far stricter than they used to be in the enforcement of their property rights. There were never so many areas in England as there are to-day in which trespassers will not only be prosecuted, but are informed of the fact by shouting notices affixed to every gate and fence and tree.

Finally, there is the continual encroachment upon what remains of the English country of the uncontrolled operations of the enterprising builder. Town is joined to town by sprawling suburb, and the face of England disappears beneath a scab of mean and tawdry building.

#### *Access to Mountains and Moorlands*

What follows? First, that access should be given to mountains and moorlands and other uncultivated places irrespective of the needs of sportsmen. The Access to Mountains and Moorlands Bill, so often but so unfruitfully introduced into Parliament, should in fact be made law. As with the moors of the north, so with the woods of the south. Upon these the

hand of the keeper lies heavy. A pair of lovers may not walk in privacy, a little girl may not go to pick primroses, without being harried and chivied by angry men, whose sole concern is to ensure that the greatest possible number of pheasants shall be offered every autumn as living targets to the guns of lazy townsmen. Nor is it only human beings that suffer. The preservation of pheasants not only involves the slaughter year in and year out of thousands of birds bred and kept for the purpose. It has, by the ruthless extermination of their natural denizens, made our woods duller and emptier than at any previous period in our history. Who does not know those distressing displays of little dead animals, prominently exhibited, presumably to discourage the others, in pheasant-preserved woods? Strung up along a line one sees the bodies of weasels, stoats, moles, and rats in various stages of disintegration, with the beautiful plumage of a jay or a hawk to give a touch of colour to the melancholy collection. Now is it, or is it not, desirable that the pursuit of this amusement by a small minority of the population should be allowed to debar the teeming people of England with their newly awakened taste for natural beauty from access to the loveliest woodlands in the world?

What is at stake here, it is obvious, is a question of values. Is it socially more important, ethically more desirable, that rich men should slaughter game-birds, than that those who made them rich should wander freely in the waste and woodland places where wild birds make their home; more important that birds should be killed, than that work-worn men and women should regain spiritual health? Is it, or is it not? The answer is, one would have thought, obvious enough. And so I would take down the 'Trespassers will be Prosecuted' notices, and give people access to the English woodlands.

### *Road Provision*

I come now to the roads. Motors there must be, and, as the years go by, they will be with us in increasing numbers. The facts that they give pleasure to fewer and fewer people, that they

promote human boredom and are responsible for a toll of human suffering on a scale hitherto levied only by war, are not here to the point. At any rate they are not to the point which I wish to press, which is that motorists should be canalized, so that some roads, or, as I should prefer them to be, lanes, may be left to the non-motoring townsman, where he can be assured of peace and quiet, where he need not go constantly in fear of life and limb, where he can see the sights and hear the sounds of nature, where he can, if he feels disposed, recline on a bank of wild flowers, smell their scent and hear the songs of birds, and where the natural surface of the soil is allowed to appear uncovered by a coat of monotonous tarmac. I would, therefore, schedule certain roads as railway lines are scheduled, for motorists only, and from all others I would exclude them. That something of the kind will be quickly forced upon us is shown by the briefest consideration of the facts. The number of cars on the roads of this country is increasing at the moment at the rate of ten per cent per annum. In America there is one car to every five people; in Great Britain in 1936 there was only one to every thirteen. We are not as rich as Americans, but we are nearly. Ultimately we must suppose the proportion of one to five will be realized in England too. Let us, then, canalize the cars before it is too late.

### *Educating the Public*

My second line of action would be the education of the public whom I have thus made free of the country. What this education should be it is confessedly not easy to say. Certain steps are, however, fairly obvious. Lessons in country lore should be given at every school and country manners taught as carefully as social. Not to eat peas with a knife, drink out of the soup tureen, spit, or pick the nose in public—these things, it is agreed, form a necessary part of a liberal education. Not to drive cars on to downs, not to tear up wild flowers by the roots, not to leave newspapers and bottles lying on the grass—these, in my view are a part no less



necessary. (I should like to add, not to play radio sets in woods or on mountains, not to take gramophones in boats on rivers, and not to take cars into country lanes, were it not that the reader might accuse me of dressing up private prejudices as public requirements.) I would have every child required to pass an examination in country lore and country manners before he left school, and would award prizes and scholarships in the subject. There is something to be said for requiring every townsman who had not succeeded in passing this examination to wear an 'L' upon his back when he walked abroad in the country, for, until he has learnt the elementary manners of the countryside, he is no better qualified to be at large in a wood than a learning motorist is to be at large on a road. I would make gross breaches of country manners—the destruction of wild flowers, the indiscriminate taking of birds' eggs, the leaving of litter—an offence punishable, if repeated, by imprisonment. The B.B.C. has done much for the education of the country-going public, but could do more. I would suggest the introduction of country 'weeks,' during which, in addition to specific talks devoted exclusively to the country, every talk, whatever its subject-matter, would contain some mention of the need for country manners and would chide their more obvious breaches. Finally, I would ask for volunteer corps of country wardens in every district who would perform the duties of rural special constables, reasoning with, warning, and as a last resort reporting to the police, cases of misbehaviour. But in the last resort the preservation of the country depends upon the creation of an alert and sensitive public opinion, and for this we must look to the schools.

### *The Preservation of England*

Thirdly, we have to preserve England, or as much of it as we can, until the people as a whole are able and qualified to enjoy it. Most of the measures necessary to this end have been mentioned elsewhere in this book. I shall, therefore, refer briefly only to the most essential. There is, first, the restraint

of unplanned building. We are at the moment permitting private enterprise to destroy the country as rapidly as in the nineteenth century it destroyed the towns. Fired by the builder the towns have burst like bombs and scattered their debris far and wide over the countryside. To thousands, nature, newly discovered, has been a will-o'-the-wisp. It has lured ever further and further into the country those who have relied on quick transport in the shape of cars, buses, and electric trains, to take them quickly to their work in the towns. But however far it lures them, it is found to have lured others still further, so that, building to live in a field and to look at a wood, a man discovers before a year has gone by that he is living in a row with an unhampered vision of next door's garage. Thus the towns are throwing their ever lengthening tentacles of brick and mortar over the country; round every corner pops up a perky new villa, and the green face of England's landscape comes out in an inflamed rash of angry pink. In fifty years' time there will, in southern England, be neither town nor country, but only a single dispersed suburb, sprawling unendingly from Watford to the coast.

### *Unreachability of the Country*

The effect upon the country and upon the townsman in quest of it is obvious. When the country is eaten up by the town, or banished to such a distance as to be beyond the townsman's effective reach—it is already the case that starting from London at midday on a Saturday in winter, it is well-nigh impossible to take a twelve-mile walk in unspoilt country before nightfall—the taste for nature which I have cited as among the most valuable expressions of the human spirit languishes through lack of opportunities for its enjoyment. There is to-day a real danger that the nightmare picture of the future which I drew in Part I will become a reality, and that a generation will grow up which knows not the country, and, unable to tolerate itself in solitude and quiet, is driven by the spur of boredom to hit balls, to hurl itself over the earth's

surface in cars, to listen to the music which machines make for it, to do anything and everything to distract it from itself. If the coming of such a generation is to be prevented, the extension of the towns must be stopped, building must be restricted to sharply defined areas, and such re-housing of the population as may be necessary must be carried on within these areas. The necessary means to this end are described elsewhere in the present volume.

### *The Provision of National Parks*

Secondly, before it is too late, certain areas of England must be set aside as nature reserves, where men may be assured of occasional solitude, of the refreshment of country sights and sounds and of the companionship of wild things. Those who have studied the peculiar kinds of neurosis which psychoanalysts and others seek to cure are agreed that they are in almost every case due to the strain and complexity of modern life. Modern men and women are like taut strings for ever braced. We dare not relax for fear lest, should we fail to maintain the alert tension of our lives, we should miss the boat of pleasure or opportunity and drift to boredom and disaster. Yet if we are to live truly and well, occasional relaxation is a necessity, and not only relaxation but relaxation in solitude. That men and women have an instinctive need for country sights and sounds and an instinctive craving for occasional solitude are facts of which the most cursory study of psychology can convince us. They are needs which the conditions of modern life make it increasingly difficult to satisfy. Nor do I see how they can be assured of satisfaction in the future, unless we make provision for them in the present. One of the most densely populated of the American States, where conditions are not markedly different from those prevailing in Great Britain, has long seen the force of these considerations. This, the State of New York, has thought it proper to set aside no less than 3,700 square miles of its small territory as a nature reserve which, for a population of twelve and a half million, gives an area of 295 square miles for each million inhabitants.

Let us be moderate and assume that 160 square miles per million inhabitants is the minimum provision which the citizens of a highly developed country such as our own should be entitled to demand to satisfy their instinctive need for the scenes and sounds, and, may I add, the smells, of wild nature. It follows that for Great Britain's forty-five million inhabitants we shall require a total area of 7,245 square miles. Let us again be moderate and put the figure at 6,000 square miles—that is to say, about one-fifteenth of the whole area of Great Britain. Two thousand of them may well be allocated to Scotland. They will include the Scottish Highlands, which contain some of the most glorious scenery in the world and which to-day are almost completely empty save for a few 'sportsmen' and keepers. The story of the depopulation of the Highlands in the interests of sport is one of the most shameful in the annals of our country. Well, the Highlands have been emptied. Let them remain so, but for the recreation of the people as a whole and not merely for the enjoyment of 'sportsmen.' The remaining 4,000 square miles will have to be found in England and Wales. What areas suggest themselves? In the north the Lake District, Snowdon, the Peak, and the Yorkshire moors; in the south, the Sussex Downs, the New Forest, Dartmoor, and Exmoor; in the middle part of England, the Cotswolds, the Forest of Dean, the Malvern hills.

The acquisition, the control, and the protection of these extensive areas are obviously too large a matter to be undertaken by any voluntary body such as the National Trust. What is required is the establishment of a Government Department, a Ministry of National Amenities, under whose control will be co-ordinated all measures affecting the amenities of Great Britain and which, while protecting these amenities, will, nevertheless, undertake the duty of making them accessible to the citizens of Great Britain. The Ministry should be empowered to exercise a veto on all developments which would affect the beauty of the area; for example, the cutting of timber, especially old timber, the damming of rivers and

lakes for hydro-electric or other purposes, the diversion of roads, the sinking of mine shafts, the building of factories and houses. But whatever are the natural and proper industries of the countryside, farming and dairy farming, the arable pasturing of sheep, the discreet planting of appropriate trees—these would be preserved and encouraged.

### *Bouquet to Landowners*

Some of these proposals may seem socialistic. They involve the compulsory purchase of land now in private hands, and the bestowal upon ordinary citizens of access to wild and waste places without compensation to owners. Well, what do you expect? I am a Socialist, and believe that it is to the national ownership of land that in the last resort we must look for a solution of our present troubles. But not yet. For at this point I hope to clear myself from the possible charge of political bias by a concession to estate owners. I would seek to maintain in private hands, at any rate for the next twenty years, English country houses and estates, and I would, by remission of death and estate duties, do whatever was in my power to help their impoverished owners. My reasons are as follows. The big country houses, their gardens, parks, and farms, are a good thing in themselves, a happy blend of the works of nature and of man. Also they are a peculiarly English good thing, since in England they are more numerous, their architecture is more distinctive and achieves a greater degree of dignity, elegance, and beauty than in any other country. Secondly, their peculiar atmosphere, the distillation of centuries, is easily lost; how easily, one has only to attend a week-end conference in one of these places turned into guest house or girls' school to realize. They are, then, peculiarly exposed to the effects of vandalism, and their fragile charm would be unable to survive the mass incursion of rurally enfranchised townsmen in the present state of the townsmen's rural education. I should, therefore, keep them inviolate for many years to come (making, perhaps, an exception in favour

of the occasional trespassings of solitary walkers like myself), and preserve them as a trust for the enjoyment of posterity. It is in the light of posterity's caretakers that I would regard their present owners. Now a caretaker must be paid. If, therefore, an impoverished country gentleman declares himself unable to afford the upkeep of his house and demonstrates his incapacity to the satisfaction of the Ministry of National Amenities, I would make him a grant for the purpose.

# *The Cotswolds*

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JOHN MOORE

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I WOULD not dare to claim for Gloucestershire men that they are necessarily wiser, saner, more virtuous, and less selfish than anybody else; yet we have kept our lovely rolling hills and our stone-built villages comparatively unspoilt and throughout the length and breadth of Cotswold have held the encroaching beast at bay. Our valleys are still unravaged by it, our woods are not yet trampled down. Our trout-haunted streams, which bear beautiful names such as Windrush and Evenlode, run crystal-clear and free from the effluent of factories, while in many cases the little mills on the banks still do their honest job proudly, grinding corn instead of selling teas and souvenirs. There are still lanes on Cotswold which are too rough and too narrow for the buses, lanes whose flowery population of ragged robin, eyebright, and stitchwort are never powdered with the white dust; and on either side of these lanes the great empty short-cropped fields where the brown hares play are not yet parcelled out in housing estates nor sliced with by-pass roads. Wherever there *are* houses, whether they are great manors or the smallest cottages they seem to have grown out of the earth, as indeed they have, being built with Cotswold stone and roofed with Cotswold tiles. They are as much a part of the landscape as the stone walls and the trees.

Thus we have saved a little island of beauty from the beast; and we have accomplished this, not by our own wit and wisdom, not by our own virtue at all, but by sheer good fortune and with the unasked-for, unconscious aid of one little red animal and two swift-flying birds. If we have kept

our heritage intact, then we must thank the foxes who make it worth while for rich landlords jealously to guard enough galloping space for the pursuit of them, the pheasants which share the coverts with the foxes, and the partridges which love the stubbles and the wide empty fields. It is not, alas, unselfishness that has saved most of the Cotswolds from the selfishness of the jerry-builder, but merely another kind of selfishness—the undeliberate selfishness of people who expensively preserve foxes and game for the purpose of sport and who love the sport so much that they are prepared to go to almost any lengths in order that they may continue to enjoy it.

So you see the beauty that we have saved from the beast is a sleeping beauty; and one day she will suddenly and painfully awake into an unfamiliar world in which fox-hunting and game-preserving have no place. What will happen to our sleeping beauty then? Shall we still be able to save her?

For I do not think any sensible person believes that the foxes and the pheasants and the partridges can last very long. For my own part I wish they could; for I quite unashamedly delight in these silly, lovely, anachronistic sports which they make for us, the riding out in the morning and the cry of hounds in an autumn wood, the waiting gun in hand for the whirr and whicker of partridges swept over the hedge on the wind. But all the same I should be a fool if I did not readily admit that these pleasures belong to the past, that in spite of me and men like me the economic structure of England is rapidly changing, and that in the urgent new England the foxes and the partridges, as creatures preserved for the purpose of sport, can no longer continue to be. They depend for their very existence upon the existence of big landlords; and social changes which have comparatively little to do with party politics are steadily elbowing the big landlords out of the way. Even in our Cotswold stronghold you can see the changes at work. Here and there an estate is broken up into small holdings, a wood by a roadside is partly cleared to make room for a petrol station, new villas appear unexpectedly upon the slope of a hill. And because the break-up is undirected and



haphazard, because it happens accidentally wherever a landlord begins to feel the pinch, it results almost inevitably in some sort of a mess. As the rate of the break-up increases, so the mess becomes more hopeless and more impossible to remedy. It is the beast's opportunity, and the beast rushes in and seizes it.

In the Cotswolds, as I have shown, the break-up has been delayed longer than in most other parts of England; even now only the beginnings of it are apparent. Indeed you can walk for miles in a straight line over our hills and see nothing that is not lovely, nothing that offends you. But if you take a bird's-eye view of the district as a whole you get a very different impression. The other day I hired a Moth and flew over the Cotswolds from end to end. It was a blue day with a high wind and the air was so clear that I could see for miles; I had a perfect bird's-eye view. I bumped over Birdlip, skirted Stroud, turned left and picked up the Colne near Cirencester, flew low over Fairford and those secret hidden villages, Colne St. Aldwyn, Colne Rogers, and Colne St. Dennys, which are as perfectly lovely as any villages I know; then up to Northleach and Burford and across the great hills to Stow and Bourton, northwards to Stanway and Broadway and the outliers where the Cotswolds drop down into the Evesham vale with its market gardens and allotments; and back over Bredon to Cheltenham and my starting-place. It was an instructive experience, for one can see the tracks of the beast very clearly from the air; his ugly, clumsy footfall was all too apparent even in places where I had not believed I should find it. I could see the towns and even some of the villages nibbling their way outwards, not wisely and orderly, but as haphazard and casually as caterpillars nibbling at a leaf; I could see the mess creeping along the sides of all the roads that radiated from the towns; and here and there I could see quite clearly how a great estate was being gradually whittled away at the edges, like an island eaten up by the tide. Some hard-pressed landlord had sold a few acres, perhaps, to a local authority, then a few more acres to a jerry-builder,

then a wood to a timber merchant, a hill-side to a golf club, a strip beside the main road to a garage proprietor. Elsewhere (particularly in the northern part of the Cotswolds) the market gardens, allotments, and small holdings were creeping up from the vale and devouring the edges of the farmlands; and market gardens and allotments, completely unplanned, can devastate a beautiful landscape as thoroughly as a mushroom suburb. (This is most noticeably the case where small holders, naturally eager to sell their produce at the highest possible price, erect horrible little sheds and shelters at the sides of the roads and stick up scrawled notice boards about the price of asparagus or plums.)

Now because the break-up of the estates is proceeding thus casually and at random, being regulated as likely as not by purely accidental causes such as a fall in the value of the landlord's securities, a sudden good offer from a garage man, the building of a new road, or the fact that, though the landlord must raise some money, he wants to save a particular covert for the pheasants, the results of the break-up are at best a bit of a mess and at worst a fair imitation of Bognor Regis. But you cannot reasonably blame the landlord, who is himself the greatest sufferer and who is simply the helpless victim of economic pressure. A great deal of nonsense is talked about the wickedness and rapacity of landlords, yet as a class they have performed their social function far more honestly and well than the factory owners and the financiers have done. The policy of the landlords may have been dictated partly by considerations of fox-hunting and pheasant-rearing, but they have shown also a great love for the land and a great care and sense of duty in administering it. The factory owners and the financiers on the other hand have rarely given evidence of loving anything except their own pockets. But nevertheless the landlords are disappearing and the practical problem is, how to order and regulate the break-up of their estates and to save them from the big and little financiers and exploiters whose selfishness is far more dangerous, far more threatening to the beauty of England,

than the 'huntin', fishin', shootin'' form of selfishness has ever been. That, at any rate, will be our problem in the Cotswolds in a few years' time; and I believe that the landlords, who are for the most part 'good plain Conservatives,' are nevertheless sufficiently good plain men to welcome, when the time comes, some measure of public control over the lands which they are fast becoming helpless to protect from the greedy and the thoughtless and the exploiters.

Meanwhile, we in the Cotswolds shelter for a little longer behind the precarious paradoxical protection of the little red beast and the high pheasants and the driven partridges which we preserve in order that we may kill them; and quietly await the end of our era.

# *Houses and Parks—National and Private*

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CLOUGH WILLIAMS-ELLIS

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I WILL confess that I have myself an instinctive, illogical, and quite indefensible feeling that seemly architecture and a gracious landscape are sufficient ends in themselves, self-justified, regardless of their social implications, of the conditions that have produced them, or even of their own repercussions on humanity. That view, treating mankind as a mere foreground to inanimate beauty, as just figures in a landscape, cannot, I must own, be intellectually defended. I have to concede that no sensible person is likely to concern himself about visual beauty, its creation or preservation, save with reference to its human values.

Not without difficulty, I too have at last persuaded myself into that more reasonable if utilitarian and teleological belief, which I suppose might be baldly stated somewhat thus: 'That the mere existence of beauty is of no importance, it is only its enjoyment by man that signifies.' It follows—inescapably it seems to me—that admitting that much one must go yet further and allow that what really matters is that the appreciation and enjoyment of beauty shall be as widely diffused and shared as possible—for the greatest happiness of the greatest number. So far as outdoor visual beauty is concerned, whether natural or man-made, that philosophy must, in England at any rate, lead one to certain pretty definite conclusions and lines of effort—even to attempts at popularizing and democratizing the enjoyment of such beauty—to making lovely buildings and lovely places generally accessible, without thereby impairing their distinctive characters.

With the overwhelming mass of our teeming population town-bred, barbarously reared in far other than splendid cities, having had little contact with beauty of any kind and therefore knowing or caring little for it, the introduction is a hazardous one, for one is unlikely to respond appropriately when presented to the hitherto unknown. Yet it is a risk that must be taken. We must perforce put up with the inevitable misunderstandings and gaucheries that will mark the first contacts of the uninitiate with their hitherto unrealized heritage.

But in order that the very heritage itself may be spared, and shall not dissolve utterly away at this unaccustomed touch, this overdue presentation must assuredly be made, for it is altogether too dangerous that the vast majority of its heirs should be insensitive to its intrinsic loveliness, ignorant of its pleasure-giving potentialities or its historical value, that they should still be without pride in its possession and careless of its preservation. To ensure that at any rate our chief national treasures, both of landscape and of architecture, shall survive these difficult transitional times, that they may give pride and pleasure to our possibly more civilized successors, they must now attract to themselves a general popularity and appreciation—a wide democratic good will, that will protect them from injury and maintain their integrity when their traditional guardians are perhaps no longer able to defend them.

Merely because there are ever more and more great country houses in England than there are rich men able or willing to inhabit them, it is unthinkable that such places should be allowed to perish away—the really great houses, that is—those that are great in their architecture, their associations, and the beauty of their settings, and not merely great in size. Size indeed, has nothing to do with their claim to be preserved; it is quality, not bulk, that has survival value, as the unintelligent brontosaurus found to its cost.

It has long seemed necessary that some impartial, authoritative, and really critical commission should sit on our country seats and make a list of those which really deserve protection as national monuments and as characteristic and precious

parts of England; and happily, at last, a committee convened by the National Trust is even now engaged on making up a list of those that are deemed most worthy of preservation, not merely as 'ancient monuments' but as living homes accessible to the public.

It will then remain to be determined how many, and which, of the places recommended for preservation it would really be practicable to schedule as 'untouchable.' There would clearly be a limit to the number, and some system of rationing would be essential. In certain Welsh counties, for instance, the standard would need to be lowered a little, or else they might find themselves with no house at all that was dignified by State protection and assured to them as an adornment in perpetuity.

Wales and the Highlands of Scotland would, of course, be handsomely compensated by a richer collection of protected natural scenery; for, needless to say, statutory safeguarding would not be restricted merely to the works of man.

Whereas Northamptonshire might have a score of 'protected' houses, the architecturally poor county would probably have a quota of but two or three, and those of a smaller and less noble kind.

There would be no attempt to spread the mantle of immunity evenly over the country, the idea being rather that, so far as was possible, no large area should be denied its permanent landmark of distinguished domestic architecture, and that no really notable building should be left at the mercy of mere utilitarianism or private caprice. Immunity would mean immunity not merely from unauthorized alteration, but from certain burdens. The scheduled house would enjoy substantial remissions from rates and taxes; it would carry very definite privileges with it as well as obligations—concessions that the Government already admits would be no more than just.

The chief obligations would be to maintain the fabric of the house and such part of its surrounding demesne as might be scheduled with it in an adequate and conservative fashion;

to submit to authority on all questions of major alterations; and to grant the public certain statutory privileges of access under carefully framed conditions.

The time is apparently coming when we can no longer look to unaided private piety for the upkeep and safeguarding of what are or should be our national heirlooms. The changes and chances of these unstable and swift-moving times are unfavourable to the *ancien régime* and the great memorials of that order; and many a fine old house has already suffered grievously either through the crippling poverty of its traditional owners or the prodigality of some new-rich carpet-bagger.

On the whole, however, we have now come to treat our architecturally important country houses with a due respect, and indeed the last few decades have seen a large amount of intelligent 'rescue work' and sympathetic rehabilitation. It is probably the means for conservation that will be lacking, rather than the will or the requisite knowledge.

Needless to say, any worthy owner of a scheduled house would be given all possible inducements to continue as its occupier and guardian, and be enabled to transmit it to his issue by the operation of specially modified death duties.

Quite apart from any other consideration, an old house that is actually lived in by its traditional family or by a thoroughly understanding owner has unquestionably a bloom upon it and a human interest that the same place under purely official guardianship must definitely lack.

If and when a scheduled place was sold, the new purchaser would buy it subject to the various obligations and privileges legally attached to it, which would have been made to balance each other as justly as possible.

Certain heirlooms are already freed from death duties, and parks or other lands that have been formally and legally dedicated as permanent 'open spaces' pay the duty at a reduced rate in proportion to the diminution in prospective building or other value that such dedication may entail. Savernake Forest, which though privately owned is publicly enjoyed, is a case in point.

In such way the commissioners would strive to take the financial sting out of any restrictive covenants imposed upon a property. The effect on the national revenue would be trivial when compared with the widespread gain to national amenity both present and prospective.

All of which suggestions I made eight years ago in my book *England and the Octopus*, since when they have been reiterated by Lord Lothian, whilst the other day we heard what the Duc de Noailles had to tell us about the beneficent activities of *La Demeure Historique* in organizing the defence of the more notable *châteaux* of France. The duc's speech (given verbatim in *Country Life* of 21st March 1936) was delivered at a National Trust *soirée*, where Lords Zetland, Londonderry, and Salisbury also spoke in favour of the formation of some such body for England—the first-named indeed announcing that steps were already being taken to that end.

Now that was indeed most excellent good news, for without some form of enlightened rationalization and co-operative mutual assistance, many of our irreplaceable national heirlooms in the way of large-scale domestic architecture are almost bound to fall into disuse and thereafter ultimately into ruin.

*La Demeure Historique* will, it is presumed, serve to some extent as a model for our own organization, a banding together in a sort of 'trades union' of the owners of historic houses that will co-operate with transport and catering interests, with local authorities as well as with the central government (perhaps through the Travel Association of which Lord Derby is president), in devising some sort of an economic basis for the otherwise embarrassing business of worthily maintaining a 'show place.' The chief features of the French concern are, first, an agreed tariff for gate-money, second, the fostering and directing of the tourist stream by press propaganda, advertising, and specially arranged transport facilities, and thirdly the influencing of the Government in ways favourable to the movement, as for instance by the special remission of rates and taxes on historic properties open to the public, where the burden of conscientiously



maintaining the fabric is clearly disproportionate to the capital value. A percentage of the gate-money received at each property (in the form of a fifty-centime stamp) goes into a central pool, partly for headquarters organization, partly for local purposes, the rest being the perquisite of the particular proprietor. It all seems to work out admirably in actual practice as, with our own experience of the charitable showing of country-house gardens, we would expect it to do.

But, quite apart from the immediate lightening of economic burdens (and this surely is what is fundamentally important), history, and man-made beauty manifested through noble architecture and fine craftsmanship, is thus widely displayed and made familiar to an ever-widening audience who will rightly come to consider such treasures as in some sort their own. Being thus gradually educated, the general public will demand that such graciousness, far from being allowed to wither away, shall be more and more extended into the ordinary surroundings of its own everyday lives—a better, more respectful use of the countryside through more thorough control and guidance from improved Town and Country Planning laws, cities more splendid, villages more coherent and harmonious, the individual homes once more reasonable and seemly, their very contents gracious and unpretentious.

Possibly one is too sanguine, perhaps these happy results would in fact not follow, perhaps we have, as a people, let go of beauty too completely and for too long ever to recapture it as a national possession, but any such foreboding cannot absolve us from at least making the attempt.

Yet such an education of our present citizens—or even of an appreciable minority of them—would really do little. We must—if we are in any way serious about such things—instil an interest in and a care for visual beauty in the young, in our citizens-to-be, whilst they are yet at school. But that I hope is sufficiently obvious to need no further labouring here. These young are, however, more likely to have their aesthetic interest and appreciation aroused by *natural* beauty, by nature in the wild, such as is being increasingly made accessible to

them and brought to their notice by the good offices of the National Trust. I am writing of course chiefly from the townsman's point of view—an angle sufficiently justified by the fact that eight out of every ten Englishmen are actually town-dwellers—a lamentable fact when one reflects what our towns are like.

Well, it is the physical and spiritual need (still largely unconscious and unrealized) of these herded millions, divorced from the land yet lacking all the urbanity of a full and civilized city life, that justifies the demand for National Parks, for I perceive, as I have already confessed, that only public enjoyment can justify great efforts for the preservation of beauty—whether the thing in question be a masterpiece by man or God. The best things that are still left to us must now clearly be guarded not from the people but for them, else democracy is a farce and education and added leisure a heartless mockery. We are all now apprehensively aware that a mere handful of active speculators of only average barbarity can quite easily and irreparably destroy the virginity of a whole territory in no more than a year or two with their paltry impertinences, so that even outlandish but lovely places that we had believed everlastingly impregnable are vulgarized almost overnight, their magic driven clean away for generations to come, perhaps for ever.

Yet some of us still have an obstinate faith in the ultimate return of civic sanity, a general normal healthy sensibility to natural beauty without our present unhappy itch to maul, exploit, and mishandle it. We want impregnable strongholds of natural beauty utterly free from any possible act or threat of sacrilegious barbarity for ever—oases of loveliness from which, one day, we may sally forth and reconquer the surrounding wilderness.

That is our case for National Parks. Frankly I am particularly concerned with one special area above all others—Snowdonia—because of its intrinsic loveliness and because it is my home. And though I gather that our aims and problems there are typical of those elsewhere, I can only speak of

Caernarvonshire and Merioneth with first-hand knowledge. The County Council of the first-named is fully alive to the issue and helpfully concerned, whilst the vigorous support of all those who hike or ramble or otherwise make holiday in our neighbourhood is being offered from all over the country—both individually and corporately through associations and so on.

The issue, however, must largely depend on the attitude of those who actually own the land—large owners luckily for the most part who can afford to take long views and who are accustomed to consider policy from a broad and public-spirited point of view as well as from that of estate administration and conservation. They and their agents realize well enough the economic advantage of a flourishing tourist industry, its favourable reactions on rents, land-values, produce and labour markets, transport undertakings and so forth, direct and indirect, and that the dedicating of ten thousand acres as 'changeless'—whether as farm or moorland—may well add out of all proportion to the value of a neighbouring hundred acres reserved as suitable for controlled and harmonious development.

The Crown and the Forestry Commissions are equally alive to this logic, but there are also scattered small freeholders who are not used to and cannot afford to take long views, and who can be sorely tempted by a few shillings offered for an advertising site or a few pounds for a bungalow plot where no advertisement or no bungalow should be. One can scarcely expect these little people to defend the countryside for the public weal—or their own little bit of it—at quite serious loss to themselves (though some of them most honourably do)—and it is to compensate such small owners for forgoing 'exploititious rights,' as they might be called, that funds will be chiefly needed.

The National Trust and the Council for the Preservation of Rural Wales are, in consultation with other kindred bodies, striving to make the National Park idea first come true in this Snowdon country because the start already made there has

already provoked such widespread interest and good will. If, in fact, the Lake District beats us, it will probably mean that it deserved to do so, though we should hope soon to follow where it had shown the way. For arguments in favour of National Parks in general, the official Government Report should be read, as well as for definitions of aim and proposed constitution and administration. I will give one quotation:

In conclusion we desire to record our conviction that such measures as we have advocated are necessary if the present generation is to escape the charge that in a short-sighted pursuit of its immediate ends it has squandered a noble heritage.

The task of the National Authorities will not be an easy one. They will be attacked by those who think any expenditure on the preservation of the natural beauties of the country is unjustifiable; assailed by enthusiasts who wish to press their own fancies or look for action on more heroic lines; importuned by private individuals who see in the proposals an opportunity for private gain; and opposed by others who resent any interference with private interests. In many cases they will be called upon to hold an even balance between conflicting interests and at all times they must be prepared to take a long view, and to leave it to time and a later generation to vindicate their actions. But if the task is likely to be difficult it should also provide an enviable opportunity of conserving for all time some of the most glorious examples of the works of Nature in this country.

Could any one be more emphatic than these gentlemen, chosen for their special knowledge to advise the Government in this particular matter?

That unequivocal manifesto of five years ago having been duly published and then pigeon-holed without any official action whatsoever being taken in the matter, a committee representative of the associations and public bodies most concerned has now been formed under the chairmanship of Mr. Norman Birkett, pledged to press authority to implement its findings and offering all the wide influence and expert help at its command to that end.

The great amount of individual good will and generosity heretofore unco-ordinated is thus being canalized into one purposeful channel that with but slight Government encouragement and help should soon accomplish—or at least hopefully begin—what so great a mass of good citizens already ardently desires. A little extension of the new Town and Country

Planning principles already generally accepted as beneficent despite their present inadequacy, a little judicious Treasury assistance and the idea of National Parks could rapidly be transformed into reality—a heartening sign of a civilized change in national values, a symbol of returning sanity, an insurance against the perils of an ever-changing future.

# *Shall the Towns Kill or Save the Country?*

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GEOFFREY M. BOUMPHREY

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IN 1918 it could have been said with some truth that in spite of all the last century had done to it, our country was still in most parts a green and pleasant land. What is it to-day? And what will it be to-morrow? There is no need for me to reply. The answer, to the first question at least, is all about us, for those with eyes to see and minds to care. Other pens in this book describe in detail the march of an inglorious suburbia across our countryside; the wanton sterilization of much of our most productive agricultural and market-garden land; the marring of vista upon vista, where country still remains, by the erection of unsuitable buildings, by thoughtless felling of trees, by Philistine methods of road-making and road-widening—in short the blighting touch of the townsman upon the country. There has been no lack of voices in the past ten years to point out the damage; there have been few—I had almost written none—to suggest any radical cure. Valuable educational work has been done by such bodies as the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, in opening the eyes and awakening the consciences of a certain proportion of the population; the country has been made ‘beauty-spot conscious’; a relatively few projects involving irreparable damage have been negatived; certain restrictive legislation, largely ineffectual in practice, has been enacted. Many have said ‘Don’t’; but few have said ‘Do.’

We have to realize that it is quite impossible in these democratic days to impose the cultural views of a small minority on

the great mass of the population. The last hope of that goes with the slipping away of the land from the great owners, who are owed so much for their creation and preservation of beauty in the past. Nevertheless, in that minority must originate any influence towards improvement that may later be diffused throughout the masses. And we, the readers and writers of this book, and our like, are that minority. What shall we teach them and how get the lesson learnt?

It is agreed among educationalists to-day that the proper psychological approach to a child that is misbehaving is to stimulate its energies in some approved direction, rather than to impose a veto on its present activity. Only by some such method can we hope to bring about the results we wish in the countryside, since our hold upon the public is far less sure than that of nursery or schoolroom discipline. Harm has already been done by neglect of this consideration. Too many of our local authorities, for instance, include members whose reactions to the strictures of the cultured minority vary from puzzled resentment to downright exasperation or antagonism. Nor is this confined only to officialdom and those who come in contact with it. There is the well-attested story of the slum-mother in a London park who reproved her little girl for carefully collecting the paper from their picnic with: 'Ere, chuck that dahn! Wot d' yer think y' are—a bleedin' toff?' A similar mental attitude among small builders and their clients is probably responsible for more rural disfigurement than would be suspected. The fault for this lies at the door of the cultured minority. Restriction may do a certain amount of good for the moment; it may easily do harm, as we have seen, unless applied delicately; it can rarely achieve lasting good. There is no driving force in restriction: it is a wholly negative thing—and without force there can be no progress. What we have to look for is some source of inspiration, some positive force to fire the energies of the new class into whose hands the stewardship of the countryside is passing. The cultured minority can condemn—and condemn rightly; but they cannot point the way to the future.

They can only say: 'Look how good the past was—let us keep it if we can.' The rest, the great majority, the speculative builder and those who buy his wares, may have shocking taste—they *have* shocking taste; but they are at least vital, alive. They make up the England of to-day, watching bad films, listening to bad music, reading bad literature. The past is not good enough for them: they want the future—or, at least, the present in all possible fullness. There is more health in them, for all their bad taste, than in those who would model the future on the past.

We have got to admit, I think, that culturally there is no health in us. We are only just emerging (if indeed we are emerging) from an age of aesthetic savagery. It is tempting to blame it all on the Industrial Revolution; but surely we have had time enough to assimilate that: there should have been improvement perceptible by now. Instead there is stagnation. So far as the mass of the population is concerned, the current of English traditional good taste seems to be lost. We must go further back, to the Renaissance, for the real reason. That was the time when the break came. The aristocrat made the Grand Tour and come back exalting the snob value of classical architecture. English building was not good enough for him—sturdy Tudor stuff that was part of his country's history. Rome must provide his models, and through Rome, ancient Greece. The architect found a new importance as a purveyor of foreign culture. Foreign workmen were imported to realize his designs. The English workman learned to copy them, and, in common with the rest of the people, followed the upper classes in despising English vernacular design and at least pretended to admire what he can never have really understood. It is true that men like Wren and Inigo Jones produced masterpieces in the new style—but at what a cost! The stream of English tradition dwindled and failed. It flowed again for a time in the eighteenth century, when it seemed that outside influences had been digested and transformed into something typically English, as had so often happened before. Then



came the Industrial Revolution and the nineteenth century, with its orgy of revivals—Classic, Gothic, Queen Anne, Free Classic, and the rest. The Renaissance had been at least the rebirth of a spirit in Europe, and its sphere extended far beyond architecture; the nineteenth-century revivals were nothing but surface fashions. Once more the flow of tradition was lost—we have not refound it yet.

When the hideousness created by the nineteenth century brought its reaction, men like William Morris and Ruskin were unable to realize that tradition is, not a spring welling up and sinking back, but a river flowing on from the past to the future. They looked towards the source and ignored the main stream. If its flow had not been so enfeebled, they could hardly have made the mistake. The Englishman had lost faith in himself; instead of encouraging him to look forward they told him to look back—to the dead past. We see where he is to-day: devoid of natural taste, ready to like anything he thinks he ought to like, but suspicious of any attempt to improve him; valuing things for their 'antiqueness' (whether spurious or genuine) instead of for their looks and suitability; awkward and uncomfortable at the very mention of the word beauty.

There is our human material, the men into whose hands the control of the whole countryside is passing. Unless some means can be found of inculcating, not an unthinking respect for the past, not a superficial knowledge of outworn tradition, but a live, growing sense of order, decency, and beauty, the present course of vulgarization and defilement must continue. The new taste must grow from within: it cannot be imposed from above. What we have to do is to find some faint spark of natural appreciation of beauty, and fan it to a blaze of enthusiasm. To find it we must look for it where it was last seen—and that means clearing away the clutter of revivals and foreign influences. The most pernicious revival of all is the antique craze. Morris was right in urging a return to the elementary principles of construction as the basis for design; but he was wrong in assuming this to mean a return to the

old materials and to the old methods of working them. Living tradition has never stood still: it has swept up into itself everything that would serve. Machinery is no more extraneous to it, as he believed, than was brick or stone when it first superseded wattle-and-daub. He made a purely arbitrary choice of the medieval period, when he might as logically have picked the cave or the tree-top.

It is essential to our purpose that we shall regard tradition as always moving forward. Each new thing must be seized eagerly and tested thoroughly. For here, I think, is our chance of firing the enthusiasm of the man in the street. He is, even now, a fair judge of the design of a new car, wireless set or aeroplane—largely because he does not connect such things with the sinister word 'beauty.' He is, moreover, keenly interested in their good looks—a fact of the greatest value to us. He should be encouraged to judge the appearance, not only of these but of everything, for himself, discarding all antecedent associations, all ready-made standards of taste. His interest will only be maintained by constant movement, by the belief, at least, that there is progress; and this implies continual experiment. He must learn to educate himself, to believe that he can be a competent judge—and gradually he may become one.

Let me give a concrete example. As he begins to think, he may say: 'I can understand that a thatched roof, or one of tiles, must have a steep pitch to throw off the rain, and that slates can be laid at a flatter angle. But surely, with all the absolutely waterproof materials we have nowadays, it would be more sensible to make the roof quite flat—and it would give more floor-space, too.' The answer to that is not: 'But the English traditional roof is pitched: it would not be good architectural manners to mix yours with the old ones.' He might reply: 'The English traditional sky had not got aeroplanes in it'; or, going further back: 'The traditional place to build in Britain is on top of a chalk down; it is not good architectural manners to build on lower ground.' More probably he would just be discouraged from thinking for

himself at all. By all means give him a practical objection, if there is one; but let him judge the aesthetic values for himself. That is the faculty we want him to develop.

But all that I have written so far is in the nature of a long-term programme. What can be done *now* to arrest the spoliation of the countryside? It may sound paradoxical, but I am convinced that the only way to save the country is by making the towns fit to live in. The townsman is very much in the majority among us to-day: only twenty-five per cent of the population live in rural areas. One result of this is to be seen in the prevailing tendency on the part of the towns to regard the country as so much waste space to be seized upon whenever they want to expand. 'Ripe for development' is the phrase. Ripe, mark you! The implication being that country is more or less useless until it is ready to be built on. Already under the Town and Country Planning Acts enough land has been zoned for housing to accommodate more than seven times the total population—and by no means all the country has yet been planned. This is demonstrably wrong. The countryside is by no means waste space. Even if we disregard its less tangible value and think only in cash, it is one of our most precious possessions. Agriculture adds no less than £300 million a year to the national income; it could add a great deal more. Strange as it may seem to the townsman, the average agricultural labourer makes as much new money for the country as the average industrial worker. Apart from this, agriculture is one of industry's best customers. And the country is the raw material of agriculture. Everything possible should be done to discourage unnecessary building in it. Yet every year sees some 35,000 acres of country absorbed into the towns!

Somehow this must be stopped. But here again, restriction will not serve: we must find some positive course. The root cause of the present state of affairs is that the majority of people to-day are convinced that the country is necessarily a better place to live in than the town—just as they are convinced that sham timbering on the gables makes their houses more attrac-

tive. The ideas are closely connected: both derive from the wave of romantic sentimentality which came as a reaction to the sordid materialism of the last century. Just as Morris reacted from the unbeautiful products of the early machines back to the hand-made wares of a mock medievalism, so Ebenezer Howard and the other pioneers of the garden-city movement reacted from the appalling towns of the nineteenth century back to an imitation Arcadia. This is perhaps putting it rather strongly: there was and is a great deal to be said for garden cities, laid out as Howard prescribed; but the same confused thinking is evident throughout and the results have been as unhappy in each case. 'The products of the machine are ugly; therefore let us abandon the machine in favour of handwork.' 'The towns are bad; therefore let us live in imitation villages.' We can see now that the thoughts should have been: 'The products of the machine are ugly; therefore let us learn to understand the machine, so that we may draw beauty from it,' and 'The towns are bad; therefore let us learn how to make them good.'

I have not space here to deal even briefly with the material evils which have followed the adoption of what pass for garden-city ideals and the substitution of the parasitic garden suburb for the more or less independent and isolated garden city: I can merely enumerate the more obvious. These include the clogging effect on *necessary* traffic of the sprawling suburbs round our towns; the long journeys to and from work for their inhabitants and the waste of time, money, and much needed traffic-space (taken up by *unnecessary* traffic) these entail; the ruination of valuable agricultural and market-garden land and the greater difficulty and expense, therefore, in bringing fresh-grown food in from the country; the monotony, architectural and social, of the suburbs; the almost impassable barrier between the poorer town-dweller and real country; the waste of costly existing services and amusements in the towns, and their absence or inaccessibility from the suburbs; the lack of either intimate small-scale village life or closely-connected urban life and, consequently,

the absence of any strong civic or community pride. These are all ponderable enough; what I wish to deal with here is a less tangible but, I am convinced, far more important aspect—the mental attitude towards town and country which has resulted from the garden-city movement. In our reaction from the evil of the towns we turned to the country and became romantic and sentimental about it. To-day we are so maudlin that we are in danger of forgetting it has any utilitarian purpose at all. We believe that its beauty is the work of what we call nature. From that we do not hesitate to embrace the false implication that usefulness must needs involve a diminution of beauty. We talk about ‘preserving’ it—as though it were something dead, to be put in a bottle of spirit, when all the time we should know that its beauty is the result of generations of careful development and exploitation for practical, utilitarian purposes. Anything alive—a muscle, nerve, or brain—that is not used, *degenerates and finally atrophies*. The countryside is still very much alive. But ‘All men kill the thing they love,’ wrote Wilde, and, by heaven, we are doing our best to kill the countryside, through love or what passes for love. Trying to preserve it will avail us little: we must develop it—with the same care for decency as our ancestors brought to the task. What we have to do is to accomplish a complete reorganization of agriculture, transport, and rural housing—and to see that it shall leave us a beautiful countryside when it is done.

Now let me return to the towns. In spite of all the pointers toward better things that we can see round us, in spite of the immense advances (actual, in building and engineering, mostly theoretical in town-design) that have been made, we are still in the main far too prone to regard towns as incurably evil. The majority of people to-day are convinced that the country is intrinsically a better place to live in. This view is, in itself, quite a new thing in history: it is by no means an inherited trait, a part of our mental make-up. It dates only from the last century. From earliest times, until the Industrial Revolution smirched it, the town was the thing that

man was really proud of. It was the symbol of progress in his fight against nature. It stood, firstly, for security, and, secondly, for culture. The country was there to be *used*. It had its beauties, of course, for those with eyes to see them; but for the most part it represented the outposts of nature, to be subjugated bit by bit. Wild, untamed country, when it was not actually feared, was certainly not admired.

The tragedy of our latest attitude towards the towns is that it has led us to relax our efforts towards improvement. Instead of concentrating our powers on redesigning and rebuilding them, making them fit to live in, we have wasted our time and money round the edges of them, hemming them in with thick, inefficient fringes of suburb. Open development, the mock Arcadia of those who cannot see beyond the garden city, has got such a hold on our imaginations, it permeates our building, housing, and town-planning legislation to such an extent, that it is practically impossible to build working-class houses, even in the depths of the country, in any other form than at twelve to the acre, chopped up into ugly little blocks. The towns themselves are almost untouched, except for some clearance of the worst slums and a relatively few bits of quite inadequate road-widening. Is it any wonder that people are trying to get out of them? And is it any wonder that, with the general level of taste as low as it is, we are ruining the country as surely and almost as rapidly as our grandparents ruined the towns?

The improvement of popular taste must necessarily be a slow process. As we have seen, it cannot be forced: it must come from within. But if the flight from the towns into the country and the conversion of country into garden suburb can be checked, we shall at least have halted the spoliation in its course. For the present sentimental love of the country we must substitute a new ideal—pride in the towns. Three-quarters of our population live in urban areas and are, therefore, to some extent urban-minded. A large proportion of disillusioned dwellers in the suburbs now realize that they have not been given and never can be given, by reason of their very

number, anything like the real country to live in. If we could offer them town life in all its fullness, free from those disadvantages which could and should be removed, the beam would tip, the balance be changed: they would flock to the new town as thankfully as they deserted the old. An indication of the truth of this can be seen in the large and growing demand among the upper and middle classes in London (just those who can afford to choose) for flats well inside the suburban ring.

Never before has town life possessed a tithe of the advantages it might hold out to-day. Smoke could go, and noise, and traffic-congestion; the narrow streets could be replaced by broad spaces, a hundred yards across, flanked by tall buildings and made gracious with trees and grass, flower-beds and water. In such a setting the townsman could enjoy the full resources of modern civilization (if I may be allowed the euphemism), cultural and recreational, close to his home. He would save his present appalling waste of income and leisure in travelling to and fro. Work, friends, shops and amusements, all would be within easy reach. The real country, too (gradually purged of suburbia, one hopes), would lie within a few minutes, since traffic would be free to travel at its proper speed. Our present bloated urban and suburban areas could be condensed to a fraction of their size and yet gain enormously in light and air and open space.

There is nothing dream-like in such a picture: its realization lies well within present technical limits. All that is lacking is the will to create such towns—but this cannot be exerted so long as we dissipate our energies in the pursuit of unattainable Arcadias. We *can* build towns fit to live in; we *cannot* house a population of our size in the country and yet retain any semblance of real country. Most pertinent to the spirit of this section is the fact that in the building of real twentieth-century towns there lies the possibility of lighting just that fire of enthusiasm for good design which is needed. Traditional architecture could not be employed, if only for technical reasons; and so the man of culture and the man in the street

would start level, or apparently level, as critics—with a resulting access of confidence, badly needed, to the latter. There would be movement to hold his attention, the excitement of new technical achievements, of difficulties surmounted, of things being done. And this, a keen and continuing interest, is needed before and above all else.

Let me end with a recapitulation and an attempt to show that the course of action here advocated is at least logical and consistent. Indirect it may be—but is not action necessarily of secondary importance to the thought that precedes it? The real field of action is in men's minds. Tendencies are the things that matter. We must begin by recognizing them and by tracing the causes that led to them. Only after that can we hope to modify them—and it is only by modifying tendencies that we can eventually bring about whatever course of action we are pressing for.

Conditions of life to-day make it impossible to impose a higher standard of taste on this country from above. It is, moreover, more than a little doubtful whether those above have themselves the necessary qualifications. *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* We are all tarred with the same brush. The stream of English traditional design in building has ceased to flow for more than a hundred years. It can only be set flowing again by a revival of the spirit in which those earlier builders set about their work—a determination to make the best possible job of it and to use for that purpose every substance, new or old, every variation of technique and design which seemed to promise improvement. It is useless to copy their work and employ their tools, methods, and materials: we can see the result of that on every hand. We should not even attempt their refinement at present. They lived in a relatively static world and used materials which only changed slowly through the centuries. We live in a world which changes with ever-increasing speed, and are offered a host of new products and processes which we must learn to use honestly before we can hope to use them subtly. We have, besides, too much that is false to unlearn. We must learn to



walk again before we can aspire to run. We may not hope for miracles of architecture; we can, perhaps, look for a little honest building. Even that will only come in quantity when the mass of the people cease to be repelled by vague ideas of art and culture which they are unable to understand and which (rightly, as I think) they mistrust—when they find themselves attracted by the simplicity and directness of the new architecture, qualities which will be intelligible to them.

The present pollution of country by suburbia will only be stopped by making the towns once again places fit to live in and to be proud of. The attractions they can offer are far stronger than ever before, and the cheapness and ubiquity of modern transport will keep the country within easy reach of them once adequate roads have been provided.

In considering the design of rural buildings and of rural development in general, the true principle to observe—the principle behind all genuine English tradition—is that of fitness for purpose. Our ancestors made the countryside as we know and love it, by disciplining it to serve their needs. Swamp and forest to clearings, clearings to open fields, open fields to enclosures—there is the same process at work throughout: subjugation to our service. If larger fields must come, and wider, straighter roads, is there any reason to doubt that they can be incorporated into the English landscape with as great success as was achieved by the eighteenth century in its handling of the no less revolutionary Enclosures?

Let us go out for what we need, watching only that we avoid unnecessary offence—and we may yet find that we have achieved more than we thought. We have only to look back to see that there is bred in us that sense of order that leads to beauty. Preservation is not enough, restriction is negative and stultifying, we must look to it that we develop, and develop rightly, if we would even hope to preserve.

# *Economics and the National Park*

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R. G. STAPLEDON

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It may seem strange that I, who am first and foremost an agriculturist, should have concerned myself with the problem of national parks, and it is perhaps somewhat daring of me to write on a subject about which I can claim to have no expert knowledge.

I am, however, reassured in the back of my own mind by two considerations: firstly, that I have always been profoundly interested in the rough and hill grazings of this country, and secondly, that in my view at all events the question of national parks cannot be divorced from the subject to which I have devoted much study—I mean the utilization of land for timber and food production.

To-day thinking people are beginning to realize how extraordinarily urbanized the whole nation has become, and many are seriously asking: What about all this urbanization, what good is it, and where is it leading the nation? Is it healthy and is it natural for human beings to be nothing but robots, and to live wholly in a man-made environment and to think wholly in terms of man-made pleasures, man-made activities, and man-made utilities? Is it the best sort of holiday, or the only sort of holiday, for the urban workers to flock from one town to another, from an industrial town to a seaside resort, to herd always together and never once to escape from the baneful influences of mass psychology?

Unmistakably there is a reaction against this sort of thing, but as yet all roads still lead to the resorts. Despite the pioneer activities of the Youth Hostels Association and of the Ramblers' Clubs the facilities available to those who desire to

linger in the country and not to join up with the thousands at the resorts are negligible, while practically nothing is being done to endeavour to persuade people to take their holidays amidst truly country surroundings.

Two things are equally essential if we desire to break away from our excessive urbanization. We must enormously increase our rural population and provide facilities for rural holidays to the urban worker on a grand scale. For the latter purpose national parks are an absolute necessity. By a national park we must envisage something altogether different from a reserve. Something far more than a sanctuary for wild flowers and wild birds; not merely a breeding place for polecats, weasels and badgers, but a place where rational beings can do things and enjoy themselves in the country. Within a national park by all means have small sanctuaries for wild things—birds and flowers in particular. Such sanctuaries, however, and the preservation of national monuments, excellent aims in themselves, are of relatively little importance compared with the provision of healthy (healthy to mind and body) holiday facilities for the urban masses amidst truly country surroundings—surroundings that are in no wise urbanized.

The aim of a national park must therefore first and foremost be to provide facilities, and not just to schedule a piece of country which after schedulization must for all time be left just as it was found—left in its so-called natural state. Where in Great Britain to-day is there a square mile of country in its natural state, with never a sheep, never a stone wall, a fence, or a man-trodden track, with no single impression of the activities of man to be seen—wolves still on the prowl?

A national park must not be rendered hideous or unbeautiful. Everything must be done with discretion, usefulness and beauty being of equal importance. Usefulness and beauty have never yet been incompatible relative to anything that man can achieve—it is only laziness and greed that have been responsible for all the ugliness we now have to suffer.

To my mind there has been a great deal of selfish thinking

and selfish talk relative to the conception of national parks. Some people merely want to preserve this beauty-spot, others that, while the general aim would appear to be to let as few people as possible into a national park—just a place for a handful of enthusiasts to roam about with never a fear of meeting another human being. On that basis I cannot see what earthly use national parks are going to be to the nation at large, or how they can possibly have any beneficial effect on the bodily and mental health of the urban masses. There is no room for this sort of selfishness in this small and over-populated island. Urban workers taking holidays in the country should for once in their lives eat fresh and country food, and be brought into contact with country people and country pursuits. For these reasons I regard it as of great importance that within a national park agricultural activities should not be suppressed, but should be encouraged and augmented. Land reclamation and land improvement are not only stimulating to those who undertake them, but also to those who see such activities in progress.

My conception of national parks for Britain is therefore large blocks of country kept beautiful (because unspoiled) where the maximum number of people can find pleasure and do things without the necessity of being herded together—food and timber, let me once more emphasize, should be produced within the confines of a national park. I will presently allude to the area which I described in my book, *The Land, To-day and To-morrow*, but before doing so, I would like to say something about acreages and population and the needs of the country as a whole.

What does the *Report of the National Park Committee*<sup>1</sup> have to contribute to this subject? In regard to that report I agree absolutely with Mr. P. Thomsen,<sup>2</sup> who in an extraordinarily interesting paper<sup>3</sup> read to the British Association in 1934 seems to me to have talked more sense about national parks than can anywhere be found in the committee's report. The

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the National Park Committee*. Cmd. 3851. London, 1931.

<sup>2</sup> *National Parks for Britain: A Twenty-five Years Plan*.

committee makes some extraordinary assumptions—assumptions which go far to vitiate every single suggestion that it puts forward. The committee, for example, objects to comparisons with the United States on the ground that Britain is ‘small, densely populated, and highly developed and has relatively little land which is not already put to some economic or productive use.’ Obviously, as Mr. Thomsen points out, the greater the density of population in relation to land area, the greater the concentration of urbanization, and by that much the greater the need of the population for occasional contact with nature. Mr. Thomsen wants that contact to be with nature in its ‘pristine beauty’; as I have said, I am against putting too much emphasis on ‘pristine beauty’—as long as the reserved spaces are utterly unurbanized or not wilfully made offensive to the eye, they will be beautiful enough for the country-starved urban masses, and for that matter for everybody who is a true nature lover. In any event if we are to provide space on the American scale we cannot afford to put a sufficiency of land out of action and to keep it in its so-called pristine state. This is where the committee, in my view, has gone most fatally wrong in its assumptions. It has presupposed that if land is reserved for parks the only legitimate productive enterprise on such reserves would be afforestation. The committee never envisaged the desirability or the possibility of improving the grazings, and would seem to have ruled agriculture completely out of court within the confines of a national park. Too much, I think, has been made of the damage done by hikers and campers, litter, gates left open, and all that sort of thing. There has never been any effort at control—national parks would of course have to be controlled.

If we envisage our national parks as areas where afforestation, grazings—and with much improved grazings at that—and farming are not only legitimate but actually desirable, then we can easily provide the space, and on something more than the American scale of generosity per million inhabitants.

Mr. Thomsen discusses this aspect of the question in detail, and he has estimated that to provide for Britain's forty-five millions would demand an area of 7,245 square miles; he would, however, be content with 6,000 square miles, which would be one-fifteenth of the whole area of Britain. The State Parks of New York State (an excellent comparison), he informs us, extend to one-thirteenth of the area of the whole of that State.

In Great Britain there are eighteen million odd acres, or just over 28,000 square miles of rough and hill grazings—land at present of no terrific economic value, but of the greatest potential value. To devote just over one-quarter of this area to the service of national parks *cum* afforestation *cum* grassland improvement would on all counts be a very sensible thing to do, and in my opinion could be made also an economic enterprise. To do the necessary could in short be made ultimately to pay, provided always that things were done properly and over a sufficient number of years. The National Parks Committee did at least make one sensible suggestion; they realized that the onus for setting up national parks could not be placed on the counties individually, upon the county councils, or upon the rates. They advocated the setting up of a national authority, but there too they went wrong, for they suggested a national authority to take under its wing only the question of national parks. This is the absurd piecemeal way we do things in this country, and a way that can only lead to chaos. It was just the same when in 1919 the Forestry Commission was set up to deal only with timber production—an *ad hoc*, and therefore unnecessarily lop-sided, commission having a free run to browse over the whole land surface of the country. It would be futile to set up another commission similarly to browse over the country. No, let the State boldly set up a Rough Land Utilization Commission, charged with the whole problem of the best national use of our eighteen million acres of rough grazings—with special reference to the provision of national parks, afforestation, and the improvement of grazings and general

intensification of the farming methods on these poor lands. Such a commission would absorb the Forestry Commission, and would provide itself with a strong technical staff—experts versed in the technicalities affecting all the issues at stake.

As to finance, the National Parks Committee made no endeavour to estimate what the expenditure ought to be, but tried to see what could be done with an expenditure of £10,000 per annum over a period of five years and what could be done with an expenditure of £100,000 per annum over a like period. Why £10,000? Why £100,000? Why five years?

Mr. Thomsen, again basing his proposals on American experiences, concludes that for Great Britain an expenditure of £300,000 per annum would not be excessive, and that, be it noted, for national parks only. The original grant to the Forestry Commission was of the order of £300,000 per annum; it has recently been increased. A commission charged with the proper utilization of our rough lands as a whole should be provided with not less than £1,000,000 per annum—roughly £300,000 for the facilities for the parks, £300,000 for afforestation, and £300,000 for improving the grazings and the farm lands.

Such a sum provided over a period of twenty-five years would not be excessive, since it would be an expenditure which would benefit the health of the whole nation and would turn to lasting usefulness anything up to practically one-third of the whole land surface of the country, for taking the rough and hill grazings as a whole they cover nearly one-third of the land surface of Britain.

The exchequer contribution should perhaps be more than one million pounds per annum in the earlier years, and particularly so if land purchase were contemplated.

On general grounds I am strongly opposed to the nationalization of the land, because I am convinced of the immense sociological value of owner-occupation. I could, however, see real advantages in the nationalization of the eighteen million acres of rough land, or at least of a considerable proportion and not less than one-quarter of that area; on

such land the holdings are not small and therefore relatively few occupiers would be affected. All operations, the facilities for the parks, afforestation and grassland improvement, would need to be most carefully co-ordinated and conducted on a very large scale, while if the State owned the land it should be able to turn the whole undertaking not only to national advantage, but also to national profit in terms of sordid lucre. The land in question would be cheaper to purchase than any other land. In any event the State at the outset might experiment by the purchase of a block of about 250 square miles, which in my view is the sort of area required to make a really satisfactory national park.

I can most easily illustrate my general thesis by brief reference to the hypothetical national park which I described in my book.<sup>1</sup>

When searching Wales for a suitable area I had six considerations prominently in mind. Firstly, accessibility within the area of the park—accessibility for riders (I put great store on riding as a recreation), for pedal cyclists and for hikers, and definite, though carefully limited, accessibility for motorists. Secondly, the suitability of a considerable proportion of the area for grassland improvement and for agricultural intensification and for afforestation. Thirdly, suitable sites for villages, hamlets, summer schools, and camping grounds. Fourthly, abundant fishing facilities. Fifthly, any amount of pristine beauty with which there would be no necessity in any wise to interfere; and sixthly, areas that would be suitable as sanctuaries for wild life.

After a great deal of hectic motoring about, suddenly, and in a flash, I realized that it was just that area in Wales which I knew best of all, and upon a large proportion of which I had myself many years ago made a detailed survey, that was the most suitable—and I do not believe there is a more suitable area in the whole of Great Britain.

I choose Wales simply because I happen to know Wales particularly well. I quite agree with Mr. Thomsen that in

<sup>1</sup> *The Land Now and To-morrow*. London, 1935.



this minute island and with modern transport, distance is just of no earthly significance—Scotland, Wales, the Pennines, the Lake District, Dartmoor, Exmoor, it matters not—what matters is that all must contribute to co-ordinated afforestation, grassland improvement, and urban recreation, and before all is lost and all is spoilt and everything unbalanced.

A few words then about my area and my explicit aims. One great charm of my area—the Plynlymon massif and hinterland—is the extensive views from many points in all directions, including the sea and coast. Another advantage is the rolling and relatively easy nature of the land; another, the innumerable tracks—a legacy of the lead mining days; another, the varied nature of the scenery and of the vegetation; another, the abundance of rivers, streams, and small lakes: while I think it would be no mean advantage for a national park to be close to an educational institution interested alike in agriculture, the natural sciences, anthropology, and the humanities. This is the more important because I would wish to see summer schools established on all national parks, where as many children as possible from the great cities would be sent for short periods during the summer months.

It is unnecessary for me to expatiate further on the charm and suitability of my area. The land in question is within easy reach of Liverpool, and if any who read this article are interested I hope they will explore the area for themselves.

As I conceive the matter 'national park' is somewhat of a misnomer, so is 'national reserve,' which latter implies the mere safeguarding of pristine beauty and of the flora and fauna. 'National zones' would be non-committal, but 'zone' is a dreadful word. I adore the word 'land,' which, properly understood, implies so tremendously much—so, why not 'national lands'? Lands which are to be used to the maximum advantage of the nation at large—lands which are to be devoted to the deurbanization of the woebegone urban masses—lands which will be dedicated to the undoing of the appalling psychological results of 150 years of uncontrolled and thoughtless industrialization and urbanization. Lands

that will be developed to further these ends, where everything that is done will be in good taste and harmonious, for natural beauty is good taste and harmoniousness *in excelsis*, nothing more and nothing less — and man himself is a natural phenomenon.

With enough strenuous thinking, good will, and drive all this could be achieved for the nation in no more than a quarter of a century and at an outlay, in relation to what is squandered in all manner of fruitless directions, that would be negligible.

## *The Countryman's View*

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A. G. STREET

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FOR the purposes of this chapter the term 'countryman' means those people who not only live in the English countryside for eleven months out of every twelve, but who also derive their living directly from the land. This definition cuts out the absentee landlord and also those people who, although they live in the country, obtain their livelihood by working in a town or from town investments. In contrast the term 'townsman' refers to everybody else.

It is obvious that there must be a great difference between the attitude of townsman and countryman to our lovely countryside. To the former it is a playground; to the latter it is a business. According to his status the countryman invests *his brain and his brawn and his capital in the business* of the countryside in the hope of obtaining an adequate return—the labourer risking the first two of these, the landowner the first and third, and the farmer all three. But in the majority of cases there is a much wider difference between the attitude of countryman and townsman. Both parties wish to obtain something from the countryside; but, while the former wants something in return for something, the latter wants something for nothing. Seeing that the townsman outvotes the countryman by something like thirteen to one, usually he gets his something for nothing. Hence the destruction and shabbing of the countryside which has been taking place so rapidly during recent years.

At first thought it would seem that the direct opposite should have happened; and that townsfolk who wished to enjoy the charm of the countryside would be more likely to

preserve its beauty than would the countryman who must, perforce, look upon it as business premises. But no! 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' So, unconsciously perhaps, the countryman, in trying to obtain a living from the land, has preserved its beauty and charm.

On the other hand the townsman, again perhaps unconsciously, in trying to enjoy this beauty, has succeeded in destroying it wherever possible. Where there was a lovely view he has built houses, and so spoiled the thing he wished to admire. He has used modern transport facilities in order to enable the crowd to visit beauty-spots, and so tarnish their beauty beyond the crowd's power to restore. In his desire to get away from his hideous town and live in more pleasant surroundings he has let loose a swarm of red brick and drab concrete locusts, which has spread over thousands of acres of God's own England and destroyed all the beauty and charm which once graced them.

'Well, and what of it?' says the townsman. 'The land was made for man, not man for the land.' True, and that is a point which we must all keep firmly in our minds when considering rural questions; but it is well also to remember two important things. The first is that there is only so much countryside in this island, and that man with all his cleverness can make no more; and the second is the rapidity with which he has been destroying countryside during recent years. In his most admirable survey of rural Britain and its problems, *The Land, To-day and To-morrow* (Faber & Faber), Professor Stapledon gives some alarming figures. Briefly the position is that for the past fifteen years or so the town has robbed the countryside of 31,000 acres per annum, the greater part of this encroachment having taken place in south-eastern England. At this rate our grandchildren will see the finish of farming in Surrey, a London stretching to Cambridge, Salisbury, and Brighton, the urbanization of the whole of southern England, and a similar state of things over a wide district near every large town throughout this island. It is also well to consider that unless the national attitude alters this town encroachment

will tend to become quicker rather than slower in the immediate future. Still more houses, more elbow room around them for gardens, more recreation grounds and playing fields, wider roads, and land for aerodromes and even for other town requirements yet undreamed—all these demands will take their toll of our shrinking countryside.

What of the countryside which still remains countryside to-day? Even here the townsman pursues his policy of destruction and damage. By his greater voting power he treats most unfairly those who use the land as a business. He permits them either to buy land or to rent land; and then he claims the right—and many people hold the view that his right should be greatly extended—to use it as a playground without payment, and in many cases without even having the courtesy to ask permission from the occupier or owner. Why so many folk should take this view is to me inexplicable, for none of them would dream of entering private town property without either paying or asking permission. But, to repeat, from England's countryside the townsman expects to get something for nothing, and usually he gets it.

The charges of destroying and shabbing the countryside then can definitely be laid at the door of the townsman—by his town encroachment for building and other needs, and by reason of his bad manners during his visits to rural England. For many years now most countryfolk have recognized that the former was inevitable, and have abandoned any idea that the latter might be stopped, and almost of remonstrating with town visitors concerning the wanton damage which they do to rural business premises. Instead, they look upon such damage in the same fashion as they view the damage done by rats or rabbits—an unavoidable expense which their businesses must bear. But recently there have been great heart-searchings amongst townfolk concerning the shrinkage and spoiling of the countryside, and on all sides one hears that something should be done to stop it. Indeed, one hears and reads so much in this strain that many people are led to believe, not only that rural England can be preserved, but that steps will

be taken by somebody to preserve it in the near future. Which, in my view, is a fallacy. In the first place nothing can be done to preserve our remaining acres of countryside, and in the second, only a very small minority of people in this country, mainly countryfolk, wish to preserve it in its present state.

Very definitely, the majority of people in this island have no use for the countryside as countryside. Instead, many would prefer an England entirely composed of towns, artificial lights, and other examples of man's cleverness; while those who do value the countryside as a free playground consider its use for this purpose to be far more important than for farming. In their view, if a few countrymen with their little businesses are in the way of progress (which being translated *means the townsman's wishes*) then *farming must be scrapped*, and the nation fed on imported food. Indeed, I doubt whether there are a thousand people in England to-day, either countryfolk or townsfolk, who value the countryside for its own sake. Generally speaking, the former value it as business premises, and the latter as a free playground. Under existing conditions neither class is willing to pay for its preservation as a national asset, and while these conditions remain all this talk of preserving rural England is just so much eyewash.

How then must existing conditions be altered so that the beauty and charm of the countryside will be preserved and possibly enhanced? There is only one way, and that way is utterly impracticable. It is to put the countryside once again into the control of those who have a business reason for preserving it as countryside, and to place it in large blocks once again in the hands of the landowner. During recent years far too much has been written and said about the tyranny of the owners of large estates, and far too little credit has been awarded them for their habit of preserving the beauty of rural England. Go into any county and look at an expanse of countryside which was once a large estate but which is now occupied by numerous small occupying owners. You may find a slight increase in agricultural production, but you will be sure to find an enormous decrease of loveliness.

But, as I say, to return to such conditions would be impracticable and impossible. The large landowner is now an anachronism, and progress will soon render him extinct. So we must abandon any idea of stopping the destruction of the remaining countryside, and be content with finding some way to delay the rate of destruction as much as may be possible. Even to do this we shall be forced to find a large landowner, an even larger one than has ever before existed in this country. The land should belong to the people. Very good! Let the people buy it from its existing owners at a just price; for then the people would have a business reason for preserving its fertility and beauty, or rather its capacities both for business and pleasure.

To my mind that is the only course to take in order to slow up the present encroachment and shabbying of rural England, and I have come to this conclusion from noticing the difference in the attitude of visitors to public parks, and to those portions of rural England which are owned by individuals. In the former case visitors, even children, do not deliberately set out to do as much wanton damage as possible, because they have a vague notion that by so doing they are damaging something which they have paid for in some fashion. In the latter their enjoyment is hampered by no such restricting thought, and so they proceed to play merry hell, knowing full well that somebody else will be forced to foot the bill.

It is on those grounds that I, a farmer, who have long hated the very idea of land nationalization, have come to the conclusion that such a step in the near future is the only one which will ensure that our children's children will be able to enjoy a sufficiency of unspoilt countryside. True, land nationalization must mean still further control of the countryman's business; but it is also bound to mean drastic control of the townsman's activities, whether as trespasser, house-builder, thief of blooms and plants and shrubs, creator of noise and untidiness, destroyer of beauty, and possessor of many other noxious habits and no manners whatsoever.

Possibly the housing question is the most difficult. There

has been a shortage of houses for the past sixty or seventy years, and, despite the post-war building, we have not yet caught up with it. In fact the number of women in this country, who have lived all their married lives with the awful fear always at their elbow of being turned out of their houses and being unable to find alternative accommodation, is enormous. It is worse than useless for people who have been more favoured of fortune to grouse continually at the building of every new house. Even I, a crabbed farmer, who have mourned the building of a row of council houses on one of my pastures, realize that the countryside can no longer be the prerogative of the few. Even I, a narrow-minded countryman, who consider the barren slope of a down to be more beautiful than any work of man's hands, recognize that the most hideous bungalow set down in the midst of the loveliest of rural landscapes is the sign of a desire for something better than a house in a town street, and that for this reason it should not be scorned.

On the contrary, both townsman and countryman must realize that our people must be housed decently, and that to do this must mean the erection of still more houses. Even so, if they want to see some countryside remaining, for both farming production and recreation, there must be immediate and drastic control of building. We cannot afford to continue this indiscriminate spewing of houses over the countryside. We do not want to see a London such as Professor Stapledon describes. He suggests that we reinstitute the city wall, and so keep our cities within bounds, permitting them to build either upwards or downwards, but forbidding them to spread beyond a defined limit; and that when this is reached, another city should be begun, rather than the erection of ugly excrescences on the outskirts of the old one. He also suggests that it is criminal folly to use so much of our best farming land for building, saying:

The immoral and hand-to-mouth economics of these days the nation can no longer afford and must no longer tolerate. No matter if it costs ten, twenty, thirty times as much to build an aerodrome, a reservoir, a



suburb, or a city on land of little or no agricultural value as on good land, it is the duty of life tenants to choose wherever possible the poor, even if relatively unsuitable, land, and incidentally, which matters greatly to-day, to employ more labour in the sundry constructional activities. If the choice was with posterity, and the decision lay between a well-arranged England with still a large acreage of farm lands and a considerable sinking fund still to be paid off, or no sinking fund and no England, there can be hardly a doubt as to which posterity would choose.

From which it will be seen that Professor Stapledon considers the home production of food to be important, and that he is greatly concerned about the rapid shrinking of our farm lands before the encroachment of our towns. I and many other people hold similar views, but to the great majority of our town population our home farming is not a business at all but a joke. They know nothing of its processes and have no conception of its size. To my mind this is a great criticism of our much-vaunted modern education. Mothers of young children have asked me why the modern dairy farmer does not milk his cows continuously twice daily from one year's end to another, and dispense altogether with the risk and hindrance of permitting them to have a calf every year! Schoolboys who have gained the school certificate with honours have suggested to me that the towns could get along quite comfortably without any countryside; and the average graduate from a university of either sex seems to know nothing about the countryside and to care less. To all town is everything, and the countryside is just a pleasant place for a cheap holiday.

Possibly this chapter will justify its place in this book if in its latter pages I can give the town reader some idea of the size of our farming industry, and also make some attempt to justify in his eyes the countryman's place in the national life of to-day. How to do it is the trouble. It is useless to quote figures, for the modern townsman is like a little child—he comprehends nothing save what he can see, and in his eyes the size of the sight is the measure of its importance. A big ship, a huge building, a large business enterprise which employs thousands of workmen—any of these impresses the town population—and farming boasts none of these things.

It is made up of thousands of little businesses, and consequently it is difficult, save in times of famine, to focalize public opinion upon it.

So somehow we must get a comparison which the townsman can 'see.' Think for a moment of all the ballyhoo concerning the building and maiden voyage of the *Queen Mary*. Townsfolk lapped up every word of it and asked for more. Thousands of them travelled long distances just to see the ship; and those who did not actually see her were able to visualize her size through the mediums of print and broadcasting. Now let us try to get some comparison between the *Queen Mary* and our farming. The dairy industry alone employs more people than all our shipbuilding and all our electrical engineering added together; and, by comparison with the whole of our farming industry, our shipbuilding is a smallish business. So much for employment. What about money? Money talks. True, and each year our countryfolk produce, and sell off their land for money, goods equal to more than half the value of our total export trade.

So for goodness' sake let our educational authorities make some attempt to instil a better sense of proportion concerning farming and other industries into the youth of the nation. The building of the *Queen Mary* was a wonderful achievement, an event of no small magnitude in the business life of the nation; but old Bill Crumpler toddling along behind his cows, and Silas Goodridge feeding his sow with her ten little pigs which must someday go to market, are equally entitled to our regard. Also it is well to remember that a time may come—and the wisest of us knows not how soon—when ships such as the *Queen Mary* will be unable to cross the seas, and when the Bill Crumplers and Silas Goodridges of England will become of tremendous importance in the eyes of hungry townsfolk.

But if the countryman's business activities are important, two other national duties which he performs are no less so. There should be, and usually is, something more to farming than just money; and the farmer is for the period of his farming the trustee of our countryside, as regards both its

material value and its beauty. By its condition one can judge just how well or how ill he has discharged the duties of his important trust. If he leaves his land better than he found it, he most surely justifies his place; if he does the reverse he is a traitor, and no punishment can be harsh enough for him.

To the honour of the majority of British farmers be it here recorded that in spite of a short-sighted national policy which bribes them to rob their land of its fertility by increasing their grain production, they have steadfastly continued to reduce this and to increase their stock farming, thus increasing the fertility of the soil, and enhancing its value as a producer of food. This same type of agriculture, stock farming, has also enabled them to preserve the charm of the countryside; for without farming our countryside would soon become an impenetrable jungle. The fabric of its clothing is woven by nature, but the design is British farming's. A grain-growing policy in this country asks for a Canadian landscape, for only by working the land in huge fields, so as to obtain the full advantages of mechanical cultivation and harvesting, can our home farmers hope to compete with their oversea competitors in the production of grain. No countryman wishes to do this; every Empire farmer I have met deplores such a possibility; and I cannot think that any townsman wishes to see an English countryside from which the trees and hedgerows have vanished, and in which mechanical monstrosities make the rural scene hideous by day and noisy by night. But unless our townsfolk wake up to the danger quickly, the countryman may be forced by unthinking politicians to despoil our countryside of its fertility and charm in order to pay his way. Also it should be noted that our slow old-fashioned country-folk have farmed this island from time immemorial and can still continue to farm it, while the clever smart American farmers have ruined their land in about one hundred years.

In addition to those economic values of the countryman he has others which are even more important. Without

his steady influence in the background, we should be a nation of chattering town robots. The townsman's conversation consists of what he read in the paper or heard on the wireless—all second-hand stuff; the countryman's conversation, while the volume is much smaller, contains much which he has acquired from first-hand experience. As an illustration of how divorced the townsman has become from natural things one town lad of my acquaintance had never realized that London's water supply came in the first instance from rain until the 1934 drought forced this knowledge upon him. He seemed quite hurt about it. Rain or the lack of it might worry countryfolk, but clever townsmen should be above such archaic influences. So, when no water comes out of the tap, the townsman curses the borough surveyor over the telephone; in contrast, when the well goes dry, the countryman not only sets to work with pick and shovel, but also prays to a power greater than man to send rain upon the earth.

The nation then needs some countryfolk for many reasons. The obvious ones are the value of his annual output, and his performance of the duties of trustee of the material value of the land, and preserver of the charm of the countryside. The others, less obvious because they are less material, are perhaps more important still. By his comparative isolation the countryman's ideas are not second-hand; by the nature of his calling, almost alone in modern England, he has retained some knowledge of natural things, and realizes that there is a God other than the clever devil which town man has become.

*It is that last which is so important. Alone amongst us the countryman recognizes the value of time and of faith. In faith he plants the seed, in patience he lives his life at a natural speed. In other words he controls the machines he uses, while the townsman is controlled by his machines. For instance, the townsman runs up the escalator; having neither faith in his machine nor time to permit it to serve him. No countryman can be driven in such fashion. Such a slave's life he would not tolerate for a moment. He stands upon the various mechanical escalators of modern life, using machinery as his servant not his master, and thereby*

proving his intellectual superiority over the townsman. To my mind the nation would be badly off without him.

So much for the value of a rural population, which, of course, is a necessary complement to the existence of any countryside of the charming character for which England is world-famous. Let us hark back to the original title of this chapter—the countryman's view of this problem of preserving the rapidly shrinking acreage of our countryside. *Nothing can stop the destruction of our countryside by town influences, and it can only be slowed down by land nationalization, which would result in every townsman and every countryman having a business interest in its well-being. Only when a little of their treasure is in the countryside will they grant it a little of their heart also.*



# Country Planning

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PATRICK ABERCROMBIE

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To fit the English countryside to a statutory pattern appears to be a wilful attempt at procrustean bed-making; how can its infinite variety be registered in a legal scheme and the delicate adjustments required by changes to meet modern needs be covered by a set of clauses which must conform to the *intra vires* of an Act of Parliament? One would like to see the country, suitably subdivided into Regions, under the autocratic control of a man who was at once a landscapist, a farmer, and a sympathizer with the needs of those unfortunate people who have to work and live in towns and suburbs. In the meantime, however, we are attempting to construct and to control by means of a general Town and Country Planning Act, a detailed Ribbon Prevention Act, and several chartered corporations with quasi-independent powers (The Electricity Commissioners, the Forestry Commission, etc.). The synthesis which would be improbable under those diverse planning agencies is further dispersed by the incursion of demands by Government departments which are above the normal law and whose requirements do not form part of a National Plan, but are dictated by an international emergency.

It is therefore unfair to blame the Town and Country Planning Act for not acting up to its formally comprehensive title. Indeed, it is in some ways unfortunate that Lord Kennet's<sup>1</sup> original proposal for an Amenities Act to cover the country, leaving a reinforced Town and Suburban Planning Act to cover the urbanized areas, was not adopted. If this frank duality of town and country had been integrated by some real direction (*not* necessarily on a graphic plan) by a

<sup>1</sup> Then, as Sir Hilton Young, Minister of Health.

National Development Commission, we should have known where we were. The type of scheme that is required for the country is quite different from that needed by towns; in the country the possibilities of land user and consequent productivity are less under human control than are urban industrial and residential developments. At present plans are being prepared for the countryside (one in the north covers one million acres) without any direct reference to the cultivation of the soil, the dominant factor.

The Town and Country Planning Act, in a word, envisages development in the form of building, and building almost entirely as emanating from the town. The reshaping of the country for the purpose of improving agriculture is almost entirely outside its scope. It would, it is true, be possible for a farmer-owner to seek to have roads and lanes eliminated and footpaths diverted to enable him to mechanize his cultivation; but on the other hand it would be equally possible for his neighbour to ask for his farm, irrespective of its best use, to be zoned for building-land. Indeed this would be the more sympathetic approach under the powers of the Act, which is more concerned with determining how much intrusive building a speculative owner should be allowed, than in deciding what is the best use for which the land should be planned.

For the purpose of an examination of the existing powers for constructive action and control of growth, it will be convenient to group the development or changes which should happen or are actually occurring in the countryside under three main heads: 1. Rural occupation; 2. Urban expansion and intercommunication; 3. Use of the country for recreation, chiefly for townsmen. Incidentally it will be noted whether, where the powers do exist, they are being used efficiently and imaginatively. Again, even where powers exist and are used, they frequently lack co-ordination into a coherent pattern.

1. The first, the advancement of rural occupation, is, as has already been hinted, almost wholly outside the scope of planning legislation. The Minister of Agriculture has no status

under the Act,<sup>1</sup> and Agriculture is expressly excluded from the interpretation of the meaning of 'Development of Land.' Accordingly the Minister has chiefly confined himself to financial measures to stimulate production and except in one or two isolated directions, has not attempted physical improvements in the realm of land strategy. Thus electricity has been purveyed, water supplies improved, and housing is at this moment being thoroughly overhauled. But, though it may sound like an exaggeration to say so, it would be quite possible for the electricity undertakers to arrange for the supply of a village whose houses next year might all be condemned by the medical officer and which as a whole should be rebuilt on another site either by reason of its inadequate water supply or because farming reorganization had shifted the demand for labour five miles away. Large-scale mechanized farming on the one hand, small-scale intensive *petite culture* on the other, both require consequential country planning based upon preliminary survey of climate, soil suitability, access to markets, etc. This basic industry of the land should be the first concern of country planning and not the last; the best land for agriculture is limited. There will always be plenty left for other purposes; it is a national extravagance to use the best farm land for building.

2. Urban and suburban expansion is continually absorbing a certain amount of open land.

In the nineteenth century whole tracts, such as south-west Lancashire and the area between Wolverhampton and Birmingham, were almost completely transformed from country to town use. You could hardly find a continuous 500-acre patch unobstructed. The removal of industry to new sites is spreading this transfer, instead of re-developing the old sites which are encumbered. The amount of land needed for the growth and shifting of the population is a debated point. It is the common practice for people who see the country invaded in all directions to abuse the garden-suburb standard of twelve houses per acre. But if it is a fact that a circle of

<sup>1</sup> Except for a minor consultative function in relation to Commons and Allotments.



twenty-mile radius would contain the whole population of England and Wales at the rate of twelve houses per acre, and an increase of density to twenty would only reduce the radius by four and a half miles, we must look for a scapegoat elsewhere. And it must again be found in inadequate planning powers; the fault is not in the detailed density of each group of houses but in the provision of far too much land as 'ripe for development'; there is a universal scattering of small groups and a continuous ribboning along roads in place of a concentrated growth of existing towns and the creation of new large self-contained satellites. The sections 15 and 16 in the Town and Country Planning Act aim at this concentration of suburban growth on economic as well as landscape amenity grounds. Similarly the Ribbon Restriction Act was a piece of panic legislation intended to strengthen the major Act in checking a manifest abuse which had at length alarmed the public, owing to the restriction of motoring pace along built-up roads. Neither of these powers are strong enough to promote new satellites or to concentrate existing town growth within green recreation and agricultural belts and reservations.

Though it has an indirect bearing upon country planning, it may be added that large-scale central clearances (going far beyond the scope of the five-year slum-clearance campaign) and redevelopment not only for flats but for the modified terrace planning advocated by the Hundred New Towns Association, are much to be commended, thus re-using urban land instead of further encroachment on the country. There is a great amount of waste land within the towns; and if smoke is abated, an adequate amount of open space provided, and zones established from which through motor traffic (or even any motor cars) is prohibited, we shall see the country relieved of a great deal of urban encroachment.

It may be said, then, that while present powers, if applied with enlightenment, should be sufficient to control and direct the details of the estate development,<sup>1</sup> they are not strong

<sup>1</sup> An improved Model Clause for the purpose has recently been issued by the Ministry of Health.

enough to direct a major policy of population grouping. Manchester had to purchase the land and proceed as owner in order to create Wythenshawe. What must she do when a second satellite is due and there is intervening land which she cannot afford to buy? Can a real satellite be achieved by co-operation with the authorities of a neighbouring county? Sir Raymond Unwin has neatly summed up the situation for London and all great extending towns in two diagrams; the existing practice showing almost universal building land with patches of green interspersed as parks, to be purchased; the desired condition showing a compact town surrounded with green fields in which at chosen places are embedded spots of red building land.

The requirements of intercommunication between towns have as marked effect upon the country as the land required for buildings. Main roads have hitherto been constructed according to planning schemes under the Town and Country Planning Act, special Road Acts, and recently the Prevention of Ribbon Development Act, which is much more of a road Act than anything else and whose chief powers are directed towards prescribing road widths, setting back buildings so far as to daunt development, and securing service roads. The Minister of Transport under this Act makes his bow as a planning minister with an inadequate distinction between his powers and those of the Minister of Health. Nay, further, we are shortly going to have the Trunk Roads directly nationalized and standard widths and uniform construction directed by the Minister of Transport. There is much to be said in favour of nationalization of main road traffic routes; but a universal enlargement of existing main roads, complete with double carriage-ways, bicycle tracks, foot-paths and other continuous features, represents the system of planning by decree instead of according to local requirements. Do bicyclists and pedestrians want continuous tracks along wide motor roads for hundreds of miles? It would be sounder for traffic, cheaper and better for amenities, if a few completely new roads, on the model of the *autostrade* of Italy, were constructed. Many of

our main roads are already swollen to capacity; can they be further inflated without explosive damage to the country?

3. The use of the country for recreative purposes presents a mixed bag of requirements, overlapping with (2), as when the London merchant-prince builds an isolated house in the heart of Surrey and goes up to town every day; near by may be the genuine country recreative cottage of his clerk; the one is a case of glorified suburbia, the other country use by the townsman. The distinction exists; but when one or other retires and lives permanently there, he becomes a country-man!

But apart from these fine distinctions, there is the use of the open country as the greatest of all parks. And it is not only the public open spaces but the fully used farm land with its oldest of human occupations which is so refreshing to the townsman. The harmonization of the agricultural industry with this extended urban recreation is perhaps the major problem of country planning. The motorist, the rider, and the walker must all be considered; the first is apt to be satisfied before the two latter. There should be a systematic provision of footpaths across the face of the land (rather than universal paths along main roads); this need not necessarily alarm the farmer; there are many paths, redundant or cutting diagonally across fields, which may be exchanged for connecting links, following field boundaries.

In addition to the normal countryside, there are the areas of concentrated attraction either of beauty (e.g. village or valley or park or view) or of strangeness (e.g. caves) or continuous stretches of wildness. Both these—the smaller features and the large stretches—require special treatment; in certain cases purchase under the National Trust gives the only ultimate satisfaction. But the National Park policy for wider areas is still waiting to be put into operation. Roughly speaking this means planning under the dominant condition of preservation of amenities on a national scale. Planning by Local Authorities under the Town and Country Planning Act is only adequate for this purpose if reinforced by external

money grants and supported by an authority as recommended in the National Parks Report.

There is one aspect of country change which has not been mentioned—and in many ways it is the most important of all—new building. It is no exaggeration to say that the average bulk of post-war building in the country is as devoid of merit as that of the later Victorian era. Again, the powers of control do not statutorily touch agricultural buildings (though Lord Justice Scott has held that the farm-house is not exempt). But here the powers of the Act are, at any rate when a scheme is approved, adequate, provided they are properly used. Unfortunately there is no guarantee that they will be exercised with proper architectural guidance whether in the form of the official control of the qualified town-planning officer or of the advice of the voluntary panels set up with the approval of the Minister of Health.

Not only is the country menaced by ugly new buildings but, under the misguided zeal of administrators of the Housing Act, (1930), many old cottages and even whole villages have been condemned, so that the country is in danger of losing beautiful old cottages and gaining ugly new ones. And here the distinction of the country as an agricultural work-place and the country as a town play-place might well be made use of. For some of these cottages which may not be suitable (even when reconditioned) for a rural worker's family, can be made perfectly fit for occasional holiday use. A new house built for the worker need not deprive the old one of its existence. Section 38 of the 1930 Act, if it were properly administered, should be adequate to preserve these old cottages as parts of villages.

This maintenance of the countryside, striking a just balance between the requirements of modern life and the existence of matured beauty, is undertaken by the C.P.R.E. and C.P.R.W., which federate the numerous interests and seek to get applied the many powers and means of persuasion to this end.

Although certain instances have been given of powers

inadequately used, it is to the inadequacy of powers themselves that failure to direct in a really constructive way is due. To analyse the Town and Country Planning Act and suggest its amendment would be to take too narrow a view. There are certain major requirements which must be met, and in considering these the distinction between town and country which has been intentionally emphasized for the purpose of this brief study must be dropped. Town and country are of course mutually reciprocal.

Three of these requirements may be mentioned: First, there should be common ground of action arranged at headquarters between the Ministries of Health, Transport, and Agriculture, and the Board of Trade. It is not sufficient to tell local authorities that schemes done for one minister must fall in with the wishes of several others; the harmonization should take place above. Secondly, and probably arising from this joint action of ministries, there should be some permanent and constructive National Commission for Planning, which can lay down certain guiding lines, particularly in the direction of industry, impossible for local authorities to formulate, however much combined into joint committees. Thirdly, and perhaps most important, there must be some more drastic policy for the land itself. Nationalization is the simple heroic method (whether achieved suddenly or gradually). The C.P.R.E. has put forward two alternatives—a system of pooling and a completely recast system of compensation and betterment. The workability of neither of these has ever been challenged.

Finally, national direction, complete powers of control, and the simplification of the land difficulty combined together can do no more than prepare the way for planning; they will not of themselves achieve real planning. That depends upon technical and imaginative skill in civic and landscape design.

## *The North-East—Hills and Hells*

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THOMAS SHARP

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THERE is something pitiful as well as disgusting about the disorder of the scene of last night's orgy. The fun of the frolic, the assault and battery, the wild scramble for the money among the muck, all seemed to the luckiest participants in it as rather glorious while it lasted. No doubt to a few it may seem glorious still—those lucky few who after the initial remorseful awakening have been able to steal away from the disordered scene to other and still unblemished places. But to the deserted commonalty, by whose labours the orgy was made possible, and whose own share in the fun was precisely nil, the morrow's dawn upon the waste and ruin is indeed an unpleasant one.

The story of certain parts of the industrial north-east is of this melancholy kind. Here in what was once one of the pleasantest landscapes in the country, the frolic is all too patently over, and amid the scenes of squalor and desolation that remain there remains also a great herd of workers whose sole employment now lies in the contemplation of the beastliness to which men can sometimes sink in their orgies of money-grubbing.

In its condition of semi-dereliction, the north-east is deserving of much more sympathy and assistance than it is getting, and it is far from the intention of this sketch to alienate what sympathy now exists. But this book is concerned with other matters than industrial economics. And while the region's economic plight is none of its own making, its distressing physical condition is. So if it is necessary to say some harsh things about that physical condition, that need not imply any

lack of sympathy with its economic distress. Quite the opposite in fact; for there is little doubt that the sorry mess that its industrial areas now present is operating against its economic recovery, and an effort at improving the awful ugliness that has resulted from last century's callousness and this century's stupidity might do a good deal toward its economic rehabilitation.

And that is precisely the point where pitifulness as well as disgust comes in. Do men never learn by experience? do they not *care* to learn any more? Have they nowadays become so habituated to, so corrupted by, the mean and the squalid that they can no longer tell what it is that they do when they flounder in filthiness? It would seem to be so here, for despite the awful example before men's eyes, other orgies that are not a scrap less vicious than the old ones even now continue in scenes hard by those that have been brought to ruin and dereliction. Even in the areas removed from the corrupting influence of industry, men's standards have gradually fallen till meanness and squalor are accepted as the natural thing. In the north-east, as elsewhere, the countryside with its parks, its woods, its hedged fields, and its older villages, still shows that men once displayed deep feelings for their physical environment. But that was long ago. For the rest hardly a decent thing seems to have been done in the landscape here for wellnigh a hundred years. Even the very ability to do such things in a seemly way has almost completely vanished from this corner of England.

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From the point of view of its physical development, the region falls into three distinct parts. There are the two special industrial and seaport areas of Tyneside and Tees-side. There is the coalfield occupying the whole of central Durham and the south-east corner of Northumberland. And there is the remaining normal agricultural countryside occupying by far the greater part. The simplest method of making a brief survey of the region is to consider it in these three divisions.

Through the seventy years or more of England's 'industrial greatness,' there gradually stretched down the Tyne estuary, for a distance of fourteen miles on either bank, one of the dreariest jumbles of houses, factories, pits, shipyards, railways, and waste heaps that have ever been created anywhere. There was, it must in justice be said, one patch of enlightenment in all this dark chaos. In the central parts of Newcastle a hundred years ago a remarkable manifestation of civic spirit was displayed in the building of those spacious streets of dignified formal buildings whose now soot-blackened façades still provide an oasis of rather sadly tarnished grace in the surrounding desert of dreariness. And further it cannot be denied that the objects upon which almost all the energy of the inhabitants of this desert was centred were brought forth as marvels of sleek mechanical efficiency. Ships, bridges, armaments, engines, and all manner of machinery that made British engineering famous throughout the world, were produced here in a pride of skill and craftsmanship that not all the hopelessness of Elswick nor the bitterness of Felling could quench. The contradictions of the human spirit are indeed remarkable, and one of the most remarkable of their manifestations is not so much that fine things may be done in foul places but that the fineness and the foulness may be produced simultaneously. That happened all over Victorian England, and it is typified here. For the production of fine machines, a miserable mixture of drab buildings was spread thick over a wide terrain till every vestige of physical beauty and seemliness disappeared from the scene; and Newcastle, Gateshead, Felling, Hebburn, Jarrow, Wallsend, Walker, and North and South Shields have all become names indicative of the worst depths of dreariness to which town-building can fall even in England.

So, too, have the towns in the much less extensive Tees-side district. Here industry has produced, in the monstrous ironworks slag tips, a feature of grimness that even Tyneside cannot match, and Middlesbrough, which a hundred years ago was green fields, cannot, alas, show the smallest glimmerings of past grace. It, too, is a town of unrelieved dreariness.



And so in fact are all the other large towns in the region. Sunderland is grim. The Hartlepoons are grimmer. Stockton, it is true, in its wide High Street can show vestiges of Georgian urbanity, but it displays far better, both in that street and in the hundreds of others which now surround it, what was the opinion of that urbanity in those who succeeded the Georgians. Darlington justly boasts that it is the cleanest town in the north-east and in most of its parts still shows for all to see how far cleanliness is from goodliness.

The inhabitants of all these places must have been waiting long years for the opportunity to escape from them. Yet it is curious that here the flight to the new roadside suburbia occurred much later than it did in most other parts of the country. Up till a few years ago Newcastle had hardly extended at all to the north and very little to the west.

Once the flight started, however, there has been no stopping it. Now the new villas shoot up overnight. A string of them, four or five miles long, lines the Great North Road; another of similar length straggles out along the beautiful west road high over the Tyne valley; and others run out in all directions, ribboning furiously all over the place despite the provisions of the Restriction of Ribbon Development Act. Similarly Middlesbrough sprawls out along the coast over the twelve miles to Saltburn, and back inland towards the Cleveland Hills. South Shields has stretched out to join Sunderland, and so to add another ten miles to the South Tyneside sprawl (now nearly thirty miles long). Hartlepool, Stockton, Darlington are all acquiring the biological structure of the octopus.

No one can blame those who seek to escape from the awful prisoning streets in which they and their parents have dragged out their terms of hard labour. On the contrary it is admirable that they should do so; they would be beyond hope if they didn't. The pity of it is that their new places are hardly more civilized than those from which they are in headlong flight. Their new romantic villas and bungalows with their pebble-dash, their half-timbered gables, their 'picturesque' leaded-lighted windows, are certainly in striking contrast to

the terrace houses of their old congested quarters. But the contrast is merely between one type of barbarism and another. That is what makes the position seem so hopeless to any one who feels that the creation of vital, efficient, civilized towns has become one of the most urgent needs of the age. For these places, though they may be physically far healthier, show a spiritual sickening that is exceedingly disturbing in its implications. The characteristic of the old streets was not so much an active ugliness as a sordid monotony of concentrated dreariness. Those streets at least symbolized, though in a chronically debased form, certain qualities of that social life that is the basis of the town. But the new squandering suburbs display not only a monotony that is very little less depressing than the old, not only a really aggressive unsightliness that is far more virulent than the old meanness, but besides these qualities, a disorder and vagueness, a violent individualism, that is a direct negation of all that the civic spirit has implied for hundreds of years.

In these matters, of course, the north-east is little, if any, worse than many other regions. It is in fact rather better than some. The suburbs of London, of Edinburgh (yes, particularly of Edinburgh, that once so civic city), of Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester, and the rest are at least as deplorable as these. Local patriotism, if it feels in need of consolation (which is extremely unlikely), no doubt comforts itself with this, though the satisfaction of knowing that one is going to hell in a large company is after all rather an ignoble one.

Why is it that we have lost the faculty for building good towns—we who once built the finest towns in the world? In almost everything else we still display high faculties of design and organization. We exert infinite patience in perfecting our machinery. We expend the utmost deliberation and care (on the organization of our factories and the sale of their products. For these things all waste is eliminated, all romantic nonsense is put aside, and through sheer hard thinking and scientific method we attain smoothness, efficiency, economy—and very often beauty. Yet in the building of our

towns, beside which the production of motor cars, battleships, and patent foods should surely be but minor engagements for human endeavour, we utilize none of these faculties. What thought our towns get, if they get any at all, is of the sloppiest, woolliest, most slipshod kind. The most rank inefficiency, the complete absence of any scrap of scientific method, the vague emptiness of schoolgirl romanticism is good enough for the places where we spend our lives. There is more thought expended on the mechanical packing of a packet of peas than there is on the building of most of our towns to-day. And the environs of Newcastle, Middlesbrough, Stockton, Darlington, and indeed nearly all our towns throughout the length and breadth of the land, most pitifully illustrate it.

The difficulties at present in the way of building efficient and seemly towns are, of course, enormous. The vested interests of landowners, builders, and others are deep-rooted in our political system. The vaporous romanticism which has destroyed the sense of urbanity and most of the feelings of citizenship in all classes of society is the kind of difficulty which is only likely to be removed either painfully slowly by indefinable influences or suddenly by something approaching a cataclysm. People get the sort of town they deserve. So no doubt the ribbons and the romantic wildernesses of garden villages will continue for a long time yet. The possibility of achieving a saner outlook in the use and development of the countryside is far easier than that of re-creating a good urban tradition. But there perhaps is where some hope may lie. The hope may be tenable that the regeneration of the one will lead to that of the other. There is no doubt that the maintenance of beauty in the countryside depends upon bringing self-respect to the town; and it seems possible that people may gradually be brought to realize this. It will take a long time, and in the meanwhile the present mess will get messier. That is a dreary prospect, but it seems the best we can hope for. And at least there is comfort in the thought that when enlightenment does dawn, we may expect an end of the present half-baked romanticism of the suburbs and a return

to the proudly formal, sheerly urban streets of the genuine town. Then again builders in Newcastle may be prompted by something of the sense of civic responsibility which guided Robert Grainger in his activities a hundred years ago.

In sharp physical contrast to these congested industrial areas is the coalfield. This contains no large towns. A few small towns where the housing of two or more pits has coalesced, and some hundreds of separate colonies round the different pit-heads, house a population which makes this one of the most densely peopled tracts in the country, though to a stranger this may not easily be apparent. The countryside here is often very attractive. It is a richly undulating landscape that still for the most part is well timbered with the woods of many fine old parks, and with a crowd of hedgerow trees; so that the coalfield, and especially the middle and west parts of it, is by no means a 'black country.'

But if the general panorama is in contrast to the industrial areas, the colonies within it are not. They display the same characteristics, though here they are intensified to a shocking degree of brutality.

In all coalfields the pit villages of last century, and of the first decade of this, must surely be the filthiest and most bitterly hopeless places that ever housed a so-called civilized people; and these in Durham and Northumberland are by far the worst in the country. Their worst features are probably not the houses themselves. These are often yardless and gardenless, built in long streets of irredeemable dreariness; but they are generally fairly habitable; mostly they are not slums. It is the utter lack they display of any feeling for decency that makes these places so wretched. In scores of villages all over the coalfield the streets have never been paved though they have existed for anything up to a hundred years and more. They are just primitive dirt tracks, ankle deep in mud in winter, deserts of dust in summer. Down the middle of these streets, with the maximum of publicity, run rows of primitive

domestic conveniences, privies, middens, coal-houses. And always, like a presence around them, is the pit itself; a belch of smoke on its chimney, smoke and a dry filthy heat blowing off its by-product plant, and, above all and enveloping all, the sulphurous reek of the burning waste heap.

These villages were mostly built by the colliery companies themselves. The newer ones, built since the war, have been the responsibility of the local authorities. In many ways these are a good deal better. But they still fall far short of civilized standards. The houses themselves are generally of a very poor standard of design; and while their draughty 'garden-city' detachment and untidiness may be in direct contrast to the monotony of old terraces that is an 'improvement' which is no genuine improvement at all.

In one particular, at least, these places illustrate admirably the curious ways in which we let vested interests shape the places we live in. It has been the immemorial custom of colliery companies in this area to supply their workers periodically with 'free coal' (which is actually part wages). This coal they deliver by the cart-load—in some of the newer places, like Ashington in Northumberland, tub-lines have actually been laid on (not *in*) the streets for easier transportation. And this delivery by cart-load determines the whole appearance of these places. If the coal were handled in bags, as it is in other parts of the country, it could be stored indoors. But, since it is not, every street is lined with miserable outdoor coalhouses along the pavement edge. The things that govern the appearance of our towns! Here it is cart-loads of coal. In other regions it is dogs and dustbins. Anything, it would seem, but rational organization and the ideal of seamliness.

There is no reason at all why a colliery village should not be a fine and inspiring place to live in, particularly in this north-eastern coalfield where the collieries are dotted about a pleasant countryside. There are in fact many reasons why such a village should be an exemplar of civic expression. Even in the wretched older villages there is a strong community feeling, though it has never been allowed any form of physical

expression. It is obviously far easier to express the community ideal here, where every one is engaged in the same work at the same place, than it is in a suburb where interests and loyalties are dissipated over a wide range of activity. But that ideal can be no more expressed through our present muddled romanticism than it could in last century's callousness which it has succeeded. Of all places the mining village is least suited for the expression of 'garden-city' romance. What is needed is clean, purposeful, rational community-building. The splendid buildings designed by the architects of the central Miners' Welfare Committee show what can be done. At last even those most conservative of men, the colliery owners, have been persuaded that pit-head buildings and by-product plants can be given shape and seamliness (as the new buildings at the Rising Sun Colliery, Wallsend, among others, show). It is deplorable that garden-city ideals should now have become as vested (and as outworn) an interest as any other which delays progress. But so it is; and to achieve a sensible attitude to community building once more some one will have to exercise considerable persuasion not only on the local authorities but on the Ministry of Health as well—and that is bound to take a little time.

And in the meanwhile the present orgy in the new coalfield that is developing on the coast, while the old coalfield on the west is dying, will go madly on. There during the last few years there has been in progress a feverish building activity that can only be compared to that which created the sordid towns of last century. Its results certainly match any nineteenth-century essay in degradation. At Horden and Easington a great sprawling town-village is being run up by both the local authority and speculative builders. The standard of meanness and disorder shown here seems to me almost incredible in this fourth decade of the twentieth century. Here above all is the kind of activity which almost makes one believe that men have lost the ability not only to create what is good but actually to recognize what is evil.

If the continuation of bad where bad has always been induces despair, the blundering murder of such good as exists elsewhere induces anger as well. In the middle of the coal-field, surrounded by all these wretched pit villages, there is one place where a glimmer of civilization still shines. The city of Durham still manages to be one of the most attractive of English towns, and this despite the curious fact that while for years scores of the surrounding pit villages have been subject to town-planning schemes, this, of all places, has hitherto been quite neglected. The city is small, and has the rather dirty and neglected air that seems inseparable from industrial blessings. But with its old red roofs piling up on its hill-sides, with the castle and cathedral group and the steep tree-hung banks of the mine-filthied river (these latter surely one of the noblest features in any town in the world), it retains a beauty which would be precious anywhere but which among the crude mining camps of this county stands out like a flower among filth.

But while the most wretched of pit villages is secure from improvement, this place is threatened with operations that will go far to destroy its whole character. Even though the cathedral, the castle, and the banks (which belong to the dean and chapter) may be safe in themselves, their setting, and therefore half their beauty, is in serious danger.

In the first place one-third of the entire city will probably have to be rebuilt under the necessity of slum clearance. Certain picturesque (and hygienically foul) quarters will have to be torn down and completely remodelled. That is excellent. No antiquarian sentimentality can be allowed to interfere with this operation. It is beyond all question necessary. But one-third of the entire city! That is surely a job of such enormous scope that it should only be undertaken to a most carefully worked-out plan. And, characteristically, there is no plan at all.

Next the County Council is to tear down considerable parts of Old Elvet, one of the two architecturally important streets of the city, to make way for additions to its-grotesque Shire

Hall. Here again is an operation which can only be successfully carried through in relation to a plan for the whole. And again, alas, there is no plan.

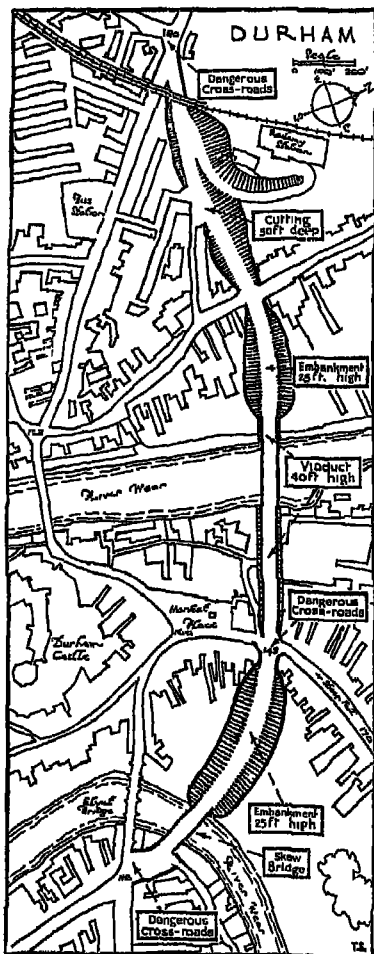
But the biggest scheme of all is the construction of a new through road (a sort of internal by-pass) to relieve the traffic congestion of the city's present narrow and tortuous streets. For this at any rate there is a plan (though a plan for the road only, with little or no relation to the city as a whole). And what a plan!

The new road (which has received the approval of the Ministry of Transport) runs for half a mile through the ancient city with as much regard for its features as a railway track. Throughout its entire length it comes to earth only at one place, there to create a murderous traffic crossing at the very centre of the existing congestion. Elsewhere it is either elevated thirty feet on an embankment or sunk thirty feet in a cutting. A more brutal and unimaginative scheme of 'improvement' than this has rarely been proposed (and accepted) even in this callous age.

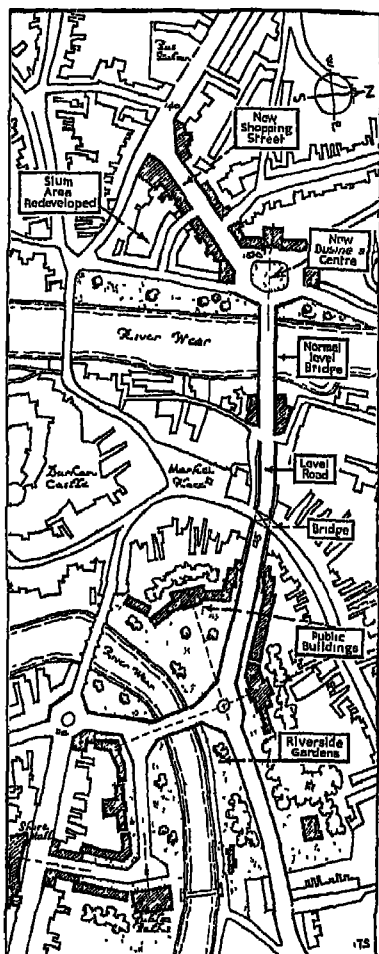
The tantalizing thing about all these operations is that they might, with imagination and enthusiasm, be welded into one great scheme of genuine and inspiring improvement. The new road (in the hands of a true planner) is capable of being designed so as to add immensely to the beauty of the city. So are the new housing areas; so are the new civic buildings—if they were all designed in one bold and imaginative plan. Together they offer an unparalleled opportunity for the creation of new civic beauty in the heart of a region where the works of man for a hundred years have fallen to the lowest level of degradation. In the eighteenth century that opportunity would have been seized with eager delight and joyful certainty. Alas, that we live in so mean-spirited an age!

All this is bad enough. But the most saddening thing about this threatened wreck of Durham is the lack it displays of any civic conscience where most it might have been expected. It is easy to understand how the local authorities of an industrial region may show little enlightenment in aesthetic matters.





A



B

A.—A new road which is proposed to smash through the ancient city of Durham: as arbitrary as a railway track: no attempt at planning.

B.—An idea of how the new road might be used to improve the city instead of half destroying it: an attempt at planning.

But this is a cathedral and university city; the cultural centre from which enlightening influences might be expected to spring. They do not spring. Not only do the cathedral and university authorities take little part in civic life, they appear to be quite indifferent to what goes on around them. Here in Durham they sit on their pleasant peninsula untroubled by the city outside. The cathedral authorities, it is true, have recently shown some interest in improving their sanctuary. They have planted some thousands of daffodils on their river banks. An admirable little piece of philanthropy, no doubt. But to be content with this, while in the surrounding city gigantic works of the kind that have just been mentioned are being undertaken, reminds one of a certain historical character who is reported to have fiddled on an equally destructive occasion.

To conclude this melancholy survey of urban barbarism, another town, not unlike Durham both in its present character and its immediate problems, may be cited. Antiquarians and specialists in the quaint have recently been much distressed at the possibility that certain areas of Whitby's picturesque slums may have to disappear. Quite rightly they have hoped that the character of the old town may not be destroyed. But here is the rub. Already for fifteen years extensive new 'developments' have been sprawling over the west cliff in shocking contrast to the few Georgian and early Victorian terraces which previously had held staid dominion there. And at this riot of expensive vulgarity not a voice had been raised in protest—which of course is easily understandable. For the west cliff was only sane, orderly, civilized; whereas the old town is oh, so romantic!

There remains the countryside. But before considering the position in those parts of the region altogether outside the industrial area, it will be as well to glance again at the coal-field, for there, as has already been indicated, there is a great expanse of pleasant country that is not yet wholly ruined beyond any possibility of salvage and improvement.

The only necessity for its being mentioned separately is, of course, the special effect of its industrial exploitation upon it as landscape. And at once it must be said that that special effect has of late years been far more disastrous than it was in the past.

The pit-heap, the tip of waste material removed in the winning of coal, is every coalfield's special scenic characteristic. Now right down to a few years ago the colliery waste in this region was tipped in great sprawling heaps which were sometimes of considerable height but which were always horizontal rather than vertical in their configuration. As such, while the heap at a close view was an unsightly excrescence, and when burning (which it usually was) was a stinking abomination, it was obscured in the landscape panorama by trees, or merely by its being dwarfed in the countryside's natural undulations. In the derelict area of the western part of the Durham coalfield, indeed, one or two old pit-heaps have already been turned into pleasant scenic features by being covered with grass; and many more, being now burnt out and having been idle for ten years or more, are of themselves taking on a natural covering of thin grass and weeds, and in some places even of brambles and shrubs. Such mitigating treatment, in this locality where from fifty to a hundred per cent of the population is unemployed, should long ago have been given to all the hundred or more derelict heaps, and all the indescribable jumbles of brick and stone which constitute abandoned pit yards should have been cleared away. It is a crying testimony to our habitual slovenliness that these things should not have been done. But be that as it may, the point is that the old tips had this possibility of being absorbed into the landscape, whereas the tips that are now made have no such possibility whatever. They no longer spread; they leap up into the sky, sheer conical mountains of enormous height, raked to an angle upon which no vegetation can ever grow, incapable of being adapted to landscape, but doomed for ever to stand, visible over half a county, a stark memorial to the industrialist's philosophy of muck and money—for it is nothing

more than a question of saving fifty or a hundred pounds in buying a little extra land that has brought these monsters into being.

Over the rest of the countryside the problems of development are much the same as they are in most other parts of England, except perhaps that the main responsibility for ill works is somewhat differently distributed here. Except in the immediate vicinity of the larger towns, development has fortunately been on a comparatively small scale in this north-east countryside. Where it does occur it is of at least as mean a standard as elsewhere. Thus the summer and weekend cottages that have multiplied around the hitherto quiet and remote villages on the Northumberland coast are of the usual nastiness. So is the surprising sporadic rash in remote Allendale. So are various 'colonies' and 'estates' in other districts. But it is pleasant to record that, on the whole, much of this region has so far escaped with singularly slight injury the fate that has befallen great expanses of countryside elsewhere, and that over wide areas of fine country it is still possible to travel for miles without being disturbed by any reminder of the mean standards of contemporary English building.

It is, however, melancholy to think that much of the damage that is being done is being perpetrated by local authorities themselves. As an instance of unimaginative muddling where one might have hoped for good example, nothing could be more depressing than the land settlement schemes which are being carried through by the Durham County Council in conjunction with the Commissioner for Special Areas. In the derelict mining districts of the middle-west of the county, a selected few of the thousands of unemployed families are being settled on small holdings to wrest a precarious living from the earth. For this purpose whole farms are bought at a time, and are parcelled out in five-acre plots. Thus as many as fifty or sixty families—sufficient to make up an average-sized village—are 'settled' together. But are they settled into a village? Not a bit of it. Fifty or sixty of the shoddiest little

semi-detached villas imaginable, rough-cast and all complete, alternately hipped and gabled, with pink asbestos tiles (hipped) and cheap blue slates (gabled), are strung out along a roadside by the Agricultural Committee of the very body whose Works Committee is operating the Restriction of Ribbon Development Act and is represented on half a dozen regional committees which are preparing town and country planning schemes.

These are by no means the only examples. In many small country towns and villages a Council housing scheme is the only building development that has taken place for many years, and the Council's own scheme is the only blot on the village. At Stanhope, a small stone-built town in Weardale, to take one example, there had been no building for forty years—until a year ago. Then the local Council built a small housing estate at the main entrance to the town—and built it of hard shiny bricks and tiles of a most sanguinary hue (though it is not the use of brick itself that one deplores, but only the use of these bricks). Here was an example for others to follow. And follow it they did; for within two or three months of the official opening of the new houses, one or two private persons had begun to build, near by, houses that almost outdo the Council's in unsightliness.

But though the building developments are fortunately on this small scale, it is difficult in other directions to avoid being reminded of meanness—and especially again of the mean standards and the ineptitude of the very people upon whom the task of safeguarding amenity legally depends. The county and local authorities in this region show a deplorable lack of understanding of the responsibility that rests upon them.

A high official of one of the largest of these authorities was bold enough recently to declare in public his opinion that far too much fuss was made about the preservation of trees in road widenings; for his own part he regarded trees as nothing more than 'temporary erections'; they could be demolished and replaced at any time. That this is by no means an uncommon opinion is obvious in the destruction of roadside

timber which continually goes on all over the region, and it is perfectly illustrated in a recent report in the local press of an instance where a country authority has destroyed thirty large trees to widen a short stretch of road by *one single foot*.

A certain amount of the intensive amenity propaganda of the last ten years has, of course, had its effect in some quarters. But even that effect displays in a pathetic way the seeming incapacity of modern men to understand the principles that lie at the root of good work. 'Plant trees to replace those that are unavoidably destroyed,' cry the propagandists, and after years of preaching the phrase gets into the official mind like that advertising a patent medicine. But it gets into the mind only and neither into the heart nor the understanding. The trees are planted. And how? Merely planted. This north-east region shows by many examples the barrenness of the merely superficial acceptance of amenity propaganda. There are numerous cases of trees being planted *only* on the one side of the road where telegraph wires will require their lopping long before they have attained full growth. In some parts the whole of the recent planting (which as usual has been in those avenues that are so alien to the English countryside) has been undertaken by people who were so indifferent to the idea of it as to base their planting scheme on a mere glance at the index of a nurseryman's catalogue, putting in one of each type 'for variety's sake' till the list was exhausted, then starting all over again. So the roadside pattern runs thus—a sycamore, a poplar, a chestnut, a Scotch fir, a beech, a standard hawthorn, an oak, a wild cherry, an ash, and so on with a dizzying uncertainty that would be ludicrous if it were not exasperating as well.

The same absence of any feelings for or understanding of what lies at the heart of country things is displayed in the road authorities' activities in villages. A delightful characteristic of these north-east villages is their wide central greens. Once the grass ran pleasantly down to the road edge, softening hard lines, giving the feeling of natural ease which is so essentially a part of a village's character. Then suddenly came an official

craze for 'tidying up.' Each green was surrounded by concrete kerb till it looked like a great common grave in a cemetery. Across it and about it were laid the kind of arid concrete paths that are associated with promenades in fifth-rate seaside resorts. Even up in the high dales, villages and hamlets are concrete flagged and concrete kerbed. And the pathetic thing is that inhabitants as well as road engineers think that the villages have been improved thereby.

One could go on almost indefinitely citing instances of this kind of insensitiveness. But an end must be made somewhere. And a final example of the way in which those charged with the duty of safeguarding local amenity can betray their charge is provided in the local press on the very morning on which these words are being written. At Gainford, in County Durham, one of the most charming villages in all this region, the parish council is proposing to convert the lovely square village green (its special charge) into a concrete car park for the convenience of those who travel thither for no other purpose than to see it. *O tempora ! O mores ! and Sic transit gloria !*

. . . . .

Well, what does all this lead to? In brief it leads just to this: builders, local authorities, and central authorities have all, over a long testing period, shown themselves unworthy of the duty we have placed on them of protecting our physical environment. That there are a few enlightened builders (but, O God, how few!) is undeniable. That a few local authorities are faithfully and efficiently making the best of their inadequate powers is also true. That the Ministries of Health and Transport are well intentioned is similarly beyond dispute. But that the whole business of planning and development in town and countryside is chaotically mismanaged is shouted to high heaven by the mess that is *everywhere* apparent to-day. The present experiment has been tried long enough. It is time for a clean sweep.

As one who for the last fifteen years has toiled at preparing schemes under the Town Planning Acts, my own deep con-

viction is that not only is the present position hopeless but any extension that I can see along present lines of control is equally hopeless. I believe that salvation is obtainable only by doing two things. First, by the establishment of a central Board of Planning that will plan and control not only housing and roads, but agriculture, industrial location, and every type of land utilization, in one efficient National Plan. Second, by the nationalization of the land. I do not deceive myself that these two things would bring perfection or anything like it. But at least they would give the *possibility* of good. There is no such possibility in the present chaos.



# Cathedral Pilgrimage

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G. C. HINES

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THE demand that our general background should be both orderly and gracious comes mostly from those who have been fortunate enough to enjoy some measure of beauty in their own homes and immediate environment. Such agitation from above, however, is not enough, because a reform is rarely carried through unless the people who will chiefly benefit have themselves expressed their discontent with the *status quo*. Their interest is one of those conditions which distinguish government from dictatorship—or 'philanthropy.' It is a condition which we must appreciate if we would enact a social reform.

Even on such immediate matters as slum-clearance, town-planning, and the lessening of the Victorian gulf between utility and beauty there would seem to be indifference among the people most nearly concerned. I would attempt to explain why this is so and how unreal their apparent complacency, and to suggest where we should turn for a true expression of what we believe to be the urgent need of the inarticulate majority.

The victims of industrial squalor are silent because they have to live in vile places always, and so, in very self-defence, cannot allow the ever-present ugliness to prey on their consciousness unendingly, for that way madness lies. Consequently they start by self-suppression and end with apathy. To put it another way, their aesthetic spirit has been broken on the wheel of circumstance. They are bound to live and work amidst the architectural vomit of a soulless age: indeed, not only must they live there but strive also to preserve their

sanity, and so are compelled to regard their surroundings with unseeing eyes. The tragedy is that their eyes, once blinded, are always blind. That is why the annual charabanc outings of these poor maimed folk are occasions for every sort of offence against the beauty that England has to offer them. To some the litter-strewing drink-and-card-party in the pine-woods is a source of jest, to others of wrath; but wrath should rather be directed against those damnable conditions that have crippled and emasculated the aesthetic man, and if there be any laughter, it should be close to tears.

There are some, however, who see disorder and squalor with different eyes even while living among them. These are the children and the young men and women who have not yet been broken to the yoke of ugliness. If we chose to know them well enough to read their hearts, we should find encouragement, for these still have imagination and initiative, and their practical help would be eagerly given for the asking.

The children cannot speak to us, but it may help us if we look at them for an instant. They live, mercifully, in that other world of imagination which nearly every child creates for itself. There they are, little ragged children on a rubbish-tip making rivers of refuse which flow past tin-can castles into a sea of mud. They are quite oblivious to disease germs and are as happy as their brothers and sisters of the carpeted, toy-strewn nursery. But oblivion and happiness are no excuse for the continuance of the playground in the filth. On the contrary, that state is a silent plea; as if some baby's dirty, cut and poisoned finger were pointing at us in reproach for our tardy ways of amends.

The young men and women are well able to speak of their aspirations and their lost opportunity. I wish that some of them could speak to England as they have spoken to me when we have been awheel on her roads, afoot among her hills or camping in her valleys. Thus have I discovered an appreciation of beautiful things which is far from superficial, and a hate for the ugliness to which they must return. You learn also to distinguish love for a home from hate for a

particular house; for love, truth, and loyalty, which are the ingredients of home, are not, thank God, directly dependent upon environment. Indeed they work so well to create happiness that environment is mercifully forgotten, so that what is often called 'apathy to wretched surroundings' is really the triumph of a wonderful sense of values. These older children of the slums speak of their own future just as Carey made them speak two hundred years ago:

But when my seven long years are out,  
 Oh, then I'll marry Sally;  
 Oh, then we'll wed and then we'll bed—  
*But not in our alley.*

'But not in our alley' is always the theme, and hearing them talking so strikingly, beautifully and constructively about the houses, streets and cities of their desire where there are to be no mean alleys, I often wonder how many of them will ever realize their ideal. As things are it must be very very few, and all the romance and beauty and hopeful youth is forced to settle down (appropriate adverb!) in a smoky, narrow, unclean place, pervaded day and night by the intermittent cries of overcrowded children, so that the spirit of beauty is killed and many of the fine potentialities of youth therewith destroyed.

Just as I know that these young people are aware of the squalor of their surroundings and awake to the better things that might be theirs, so do I know that they can appreciate a decent, even a gracious, environment. We have all heard, too often, the tale of the 'coals in the bath,' of the abuse of new amenities by immigrants from old slums. We have heard it used even as a reason for maintaining the *status quo*. Let us, once for all, free our minds of a callous fallacy. Those who bring slumland habits to the new estates have been born, bred, and hardened to that semi-savage way of life which is the only possible one for six people who have to dwell in two rooms, and to expect their adjustment to proper surroundings at once, if ever, is to expect an old pit pony, brought to the surface, to roam his native moors with all the ease and freedom

of his distant youth. Such people's misfortune, so far from stemming the course of progress, should speed it, for they are the living symbol of the evil which we have to destroy. I claim that beautiful houses in well-planned estates, factories worthy of the work done in them and public amenities worthy of the public are in truth the 'native moors'—the birthright of every Englishman. There the older generation may yet learn to live and cease merely to exist, and there, for certain, the growing generation will live to develop those qualities which their present environment wears away to a colourless nothingness.

That, as I have experienced it, is the witness of the people to the things which concern us here and now, and not only in this book. I can but introduce you to it, for to know it, you must go out and find it for yourselves. . . . Do you remember that 'Cathedral Pilgrimage,' arranged some years ago to bring people to their nearest cathedral and money to the unemployed? That far it succeeded; it brought the sight-seers and raised the money. As a pilgrimage, however, it failed—a synthetic experience costing half a crown. It failed because there was no shrine in our cathedrals to inspire a modern pilgrim making penance for the social evils of his day. If we wish to destroy an evil that affects the lives of people, then an understanding of those lives is the first condition of our work. This means that we must make a pilgrimage not to a cathedral, but to a shrine that will inspire us. I believe that, for us, the shrine is the heart of the young folk of the mean and ugly places. If any one is able to enter there as a pilgrim he will almost certainly leave it as a crusader and the great work will have begun.

# *The Rake's Progress*

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HOWARD MARSHALL

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WE are making a screaming mess of England. This, briefly, is my case. Screaming is the word, moreover, for the horrors of the exploiters' work shriek at us whenever we walk or drive a few miles through our once incomparable countryside.

The trouble is that my case is not new. It has been pleaded and argued by advocates far more powerful than myself. The facts have been laid before the Government. The public have been warned by radio, press, and pamphlet that their heritage is being befouled and destroyed. And still the destruction spreads like a prairie fire. The jerry-built bijou residences creep out along the roads. Beauty is sacrificed on the altar of the speeding motorist. Advertisements and petrol stations and shanties ruin our villages. The electric grid strides across the hill-sides. A gimcrack civilization crawls like a gigantic slug over the country, leaving a foul trail of slime behind it.

So I have worried over the writing of this chapter. What purpose would be served, I wondered, by telling once more the tale of horror? And then I remembered some of the letters which reached me when I was broadcasting a series of talks on this same subject. They were written, apparently, by human ostriches, with heads firmly stuck in the sand. Here is an extract from one of them:

Surely you aren't serious when you talk of the despoliation of the countryside? Why, from the windows of my house I look across miles of open country, and there is no likelihood of development. There are thousands of acres of England which will never be touched.

Now that, odd though it may seem, is a very prevalent attitude. It encourages me to describe again some of the

grotesque depredations which we are tamely allowing the money-grubbers to make, though I shall probably be preaching to the converted. If only our good, complacent, happy-go-lucky citizens could be clamped in their chairs while this book was read to them chapter by chapter, the public conscience might be stirred and a real attack on the situation would perhaps become possible.

I wonder, though, what those thousands upon thousands of motorists who drove along the south coast last summer thought of our countryside? Were they really proud of the way we guard 'This little world, this precious stone set in the silver sea'? Perhaps some of them travelled the coast road from Seaford towards Portsmouth. Perhaps they saw, as they left Seaford, the little new red-roofed houses eating their way into the downs along the quiet lane to Bishopstone, that charming village now so disgracefully threatened. Perhaps they heard that 4,000 new houses are to be built above the lovely Cuckmere Valley, on land which now is farm land, wild and enchanting? That seems to me a scandalous thing, and, more than that, a crazy thing. The Cuckmere Valley is one of the most beautiful of our national possessions. It is not spectacular, perhaps, but it has its own quiet loveliness, a charm which cannot readily be matched elsewhere.

Very few dwellers in the south of England have not seen the Cuckmere Valley, have not enjoyed its peace and paused to watch the changing colours of the cloud shadows pass over it. And now, without a struggle, we allow a business man to seize a slice of it and exploit it to his own advantage.

It is difficult to understand the complacency and the blindness which permit such things to be. If we valued this island of ours we should rise in our wrath and tear the exploiter and his work to pieces. Certainly we should deal drastically with the man who came into our garden and calmly erected a tin shanty in the middle of our lawn. Why then, in the name of common sense, do we not execrate and scourge the men who desecrate the larger garden which is the English countryside and our common birthright?

All along that south coast road the story is the same. The valley of the Ouse by Newhaven is mean and dirty and bedraggled. Peacehaven is a monstrous blot on the national conscience. The smart, slick little houses which straggle through Saltdean and infest the lovely village of Rottingdean and eat away the beauty of a glorious stretch of downland are monuments to our national stupidity.

How have we allowed the exploiters to filch these downs away from us? What perverted sense of values is it which seeks to turn the coastline of England into a concrete promenade, with unlovely suburban colonies stretching away behind it? One by one the quiet places go. Little Bosham will soon be encircled; West Wittering may be developed. Few stretches of southern seaboard will be free from the vulgarities of promenade and bandstand or else of the still more wasteful scatterations of the speculative builder.

Not only in the south is this happening; and, lest you should think me prejudiced, here is Mr. Edmund Vale telling us how part of the Welsh coastline has been devoured. I do not know whether Mr. Vale would be content to take his stand with me as an ordinary citizen acutely conscious of the waste of beauty; but it is simply as an ordinary citizen that I applaud Mr. Vale when he says:

In 1850 the Chester and Holyhead Railway opened up an absolutely virgin coastline which had perfect sandy bays, suitable for the new sport of sea-bathing, and every bay had a setting that was at once beautiful and romantic beyond the wildest dreams of a generation that had been nourished on Walter Scott's novels. It was like a gold-rush. The scum of the building trade got there first, and staked their claims. The pioneers were Englishmen or Scotchmen. They ran up apartment houses at competitive speeds and sooner or later a scratch town council fitted out an esplanade in front of them. Meanwhile, the Welshman who was sufficiently interested to watch what was going on, found out that it was neither fashionable nor profitable to build small solid houses as his forefathers had done. He quickly learned the trick of jerry-building, and added a few tricks of his own to it. Thus was established the Welsh local contractor, and the Welsh town councillor, whose combined essays in the creation of 'accommodation' for visitors have done more to ruin the beauty and romance of Wales than the destructive forces of all belligerents engaged in a world war could have done.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The World of Wales.*

There is described the process which is eating away the beauty of the British Isles like a corrosive acid. The scum of the building trade are at work, not only in Wales, but wherever they can stake a claim for their nefarious operations. They swarm like destructive ants over our countryside, and we stand aside and watch their depredations helplessly.

Unhappily there are other unscrupulous gentlemen at work and among them there is one particularly offensive type. In a little village which I know very well there lives a prosperous individual in a large house surrounded by extensive grounds, where every prospect pleases. This individual has as much money as he needs; but he also plumes himself on what he calls 'an eye to the main chance.' He has therefore bought up large tracts of land round the village, and developed them. Already a rash of hideous bungalows defiles one approach to the village and before long its peaceful beauty will be surrounded by these horrors. Another corner of England will be submerged; and all because we allow a profiteer, secure in his own estate, to enrich himself further at the expense of the community.

The maddening thing is that these bungalows need not be hideous and out of keeping with their surroundings. I do not suggest that building should be restricted, only that it should be intelligently supervised. For the same outlay necessitated by the typical ramshackle bungalow run up by rule of thumb, it is possible to build a decent, inoffensive house, designed to fit appropriately into its particular local background.

Man can create beauty as well as destroy it. The trouble is that greed obscures such apparently irrelevant issues; and enemies of the State, like the individual I have described, will continue their selfish exploitations.

It is incredible that we should not be taking more active steps to counteract this widespread erosion of the countryside. Even where local conscience is fully alive to the dangers of exploitation, the battle against the forces of destruction is incessant. In the Lake District, for example, we have a



national possession unrivalled for its particular loveliness throughout the world. Let me admit that here the forces of sanity and protection are strongly mobilized. The National Trust is firmly entrenched. The Council for the Preservation of Rural England are vigilant. Organizations like the Lake District Safeguarding Society and the Lake District Advisory Architectural Panel are active. It is obvious, surely, that the Lake District must be preserved intact for the pleasure of our people.

It is obvious; and yet, as I say, the fighting is incessant. The Lake District is a battleground where those who would save our national possessions are waging battle constantly against the greedy hordes of despoilers. It is fantastic that such a warfare should be possible, fantastic that it should be left to individual organizations to hold the front line.

Let me now give you briefly a few more instances, taken at random, of the menace to our countryside; and first I will ask you to climb the hills above Oxford, and see what havoc the speculative builder has wrought around that famous city. I am not complaining about the industrial developments, incongruous though they are. I only ask you to judge for yourself whether a sane and wideawake community would have permitted the building which is transforming Oxford from a medieval dream into a modern nightmare.

Then look at Amersham, a seventeenth-century town which once was lovely but now is eaten away with shoddiness; and if that is not sufficient to stir your resentment, pass on to High Wycombe, where industrial vulgarity is in supreme command.

Think also of the mentality which permits the wooded slopes of Box Hill to be flood-lit at night—another outbreak of the modern spirit, perpetrated this time by the London and Home Counties Electricity Authority. Reflect upon the scheme now afoot for making a reservoir in Taw Marsh and a hydro-electric station at Sticklepath in Devon—so that under the guise of expediency the valley of the Taw will pay its dividends and lose its peace for ever.

Dwell upon the significance of the advertisements which

can now be seen near the central stretch of the Roman Wall in Northumberland, a county which has suffered heavily from hoardings and ribbon building. Take a drive along the Great West Road, or better still, if you wish to realize the extent of the chaos into which indiscriminate building has plunged us, go up in an aeroplane, as Mr. Filson Young did recently, when he wrote:

To realize the muddling and blundering that is going on . . . you must get up into the air and see what combined greed and lack of design may do to make the world ugly. . . .

A glance at the Barnet by-pass on its way from Finchley to Hatfield told a tale that is to be seen repeated on the outskirts of nearly all the big towns in England. As soon as this road leaves the dense suburban belt that extends to Mill Hill, this dreary trimming of its edges by little houses begins and continues for miles; one comes to realize the extent of this new method of planning homes in mile-long ribbons along the arterial roads. . . . Behind the noisy roads . . . lie patches and spaces apparently unused by man; for the people who inhabit these ribboned roads have no contact with the land, and agriculture means nothing to them. . . .

Turning south-east from Hatfield, we crossed the end of Epping Forest and the North Circular Road, and what I think is called the Eastern Avenue. We looked down upon a world that crowded along even these great arteries; they had been established so that men could escape from crowded populations, but the arteries were themselves becoming choked. Over places like Wanstead and Leytonstone, over Stratford and West Ham, one was flying over a world of houses so dense that it was no case of ribbon roads, but roads so choked that it was almost impossible to follow them or mark their direction.

Just a sordid, stupid, unnecessary, pathetic mess—that is what we are making of one of the world's most beautiful countries.

No doubt a lack of wise education is largely to blame. We live in an age of transition. The countryman seeks work in the town; the townsman, not knowing what he will find or what he should seek, takes his relaxation in the country, bringing with him urban habits and standards, so that the jerry-built villa is no eyesore to his brick-dimmed vision. A schoolmaster recently put the case well:

I am afraid that town children and adults grow up in the company of so much that is ugly and incongruous that they are inclined to accept the view that good taste must give way to utilitarianism and commercialism. They are apt to take for granted the disfigurement of streets by garish buildings, shops, hoardings, petrol stations and signs. In the 200 yards of street which lead to my school there are forty-six projecting advertising signs

(which incidentally cancel out each other in the effectiveness of purpose) and sixty over-hanging lamp brackets. My children see them every day.

Unless there is deliberate education to counteract this blindness, we can look for no help from the younger generation.

We have allies in the fight, two in particular, whose work is worthy of all praise: the National Trust and the Council for the Preservation of Rural England. Already the National Trust controls some 60,000 acres of the cream of the land. But all the time the Trust is being flooded with fresh appeals to save here a stretch of downland and there a famous wood. Their work is never done. Take the case of Glastonbury Tor, for instance. Four years ago this famous little landmark was in danger of being sold for building. The National Trust came to the rescue, acquired seven acres of meadowland on the western approach, and made it safe for all time from the builder's hands. Now, I believe, £2,500 must be found to buy the upper slopes of the Tor and the old church tower, so that this historic possession may be kept unspoiled.

As I write some of the finest cliff scenery in North Cornwall—at Pentire Head—is threatened with building development. Already £4,500 has been raised by public appeal; if another £500 is found, the Trust will be able to take over the land. Everywhere it is the same tale. And we respond so pitifully to the appeals for co-operation.

The C.P.R.E. is a national organization which attempts valiantly to do all that its name implies; the Scapa Society fights against the disfigurement of the countryside by advertisements; the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society, and a host of local associations make up the ranks of those who are fighting for the countryside. It is up to us to see that they are supported by the individual.

But these excellent organizations are not enough, thankful though we may be for the vision which has called them into being and the devotion which has driven them onwards. We shall not succeed in saving the countryside by such piecemeal resistance. We should not be dependent upon the efforts of

devoted individuals, however whole-hearted their labours may be.

We must realize that we are engaged in a form of civil war. On the one side are those who realize that in the countryside, wisely cared for and planned, we have a national possession of inestimable value. Ranged against them, militant and greedily active, are the speculative builders, the advertising agents, a whole class who see in the countryside nothing but a source of profit to themselves. These men, whether they are local authorities intent on 'development' at all costs, or private individuals running their own particular racket, are actuated by no other motive than financial gain. Their sole concern is with balance sheets and profits. The countryside is just another commodity to be exploited to the best advantage.

In no sense, I suggest, are they worthy citizens. They are, indeed, enemies of society, for they are sedulously destroying one of our major national assets.

It is grotesque that the State should allow them to carry out their depredations relatively unhindered. They are, I repeat, enemies of society: they should be dealt with as ruthlessly as any other enemies—regarded, if you like, as an invading army—exterminated legally, if not actually, though I would very happily see some of them—failing conversion—plunged into boiling oil.

Now I shall be told that the State does take action against these marauders. I shall be reminded of the 1932 Town and Country Planning Act. As a sign that the Government recognizes the need for action, this is well enough; but in practice it is a weak gesture and no more. Let us admit that the Government wish the country to be developed in accordance with a detailed plan which shall take into account the interests of the community as a whole. This seems sufficiently equitable, until we face the fact that, under the 1932 Act, planning is delegated to each individual local authority, while the Ministry of Health merely controls the general course of development when it takes place.

So we come to local authorities, the arbiters of our destiny, upon whom rests the responsibility for planning their regional development.

A number of local authorities are active, intelligent, and public-spirited. The majority are uninformed and quite unfitted to deal with this particular duty of preserving our amenities. After all, what are most local authorities? The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker—and frequently the local builder or contractor into the bargain. The local authorities very often are mainly concerned with attracting money to their towns and shops; and if they can do so by 'development,' in the form of an immense building estate or miles of concrete promenade, they will push ahead with complete disregard for anything so apparently unpractical as scenic beauty.

The transformation of the downs round Brighton into glorified suburbs is no doubt regarded as an admirable stroke of civic policy, attracting visitors and residents who will spend their money in Brighton. I would suggest that the Eastbourne authorities were far wiser, from every point of view, when they decided to preserve unchanged that glorious stretch of downland by Beachy Head.

Let me say here that I am not arguing against sane and reasonable development. Obviously there must be development; it may even be reasonable to suggest that corners on roads should be straightened here and there, and trees cut down and hedgerows levelled for the benefit of the motoring community, though as a motorist myself I suggest that less speed would meet the case far better.

What I do maintain is that no development should be permitted which interferes with the general enjoyment of the countryside. And this brings us to the question of standards.

The jerry-builder may argue that the ordinary citizen does not object to his loathsome products. That is simply because the ordinary citizen does not realize how those products might be improved, or how a similar number of houses might be supplied without destroying the amenities. Here is a

further argument for taking such matters out of the control of the ordinary citizens or local councils, and handing them over to those experienced in the altruistic planning of the countryside.

We may argue further that the 1932 Planning Act gives us wide powers and that it is therefore our duty to see that the right people are duly elected to the local councils and that, when elected, they are active and vigilant in applying these powers.

It is possible, in fact, to outline an immediately practicable course of action to be pursued by every one who cares about the countryside; and here it is:

1. Vitally important: See that the right people are elected as local authorities—people capable of planning with integrity and intelligence.
2. Having worked for the election of the right local authorities, see that they include the clause to control elevations in their planning schemes.
3. Insist that the local authority uses the voluntary panel of free architectural advice when considering building plans. (These panels have been set up all over England and Wales by the C.P.R.E. in conjunction with the R.I.B.A.)
4. See that the local authority is vigilant. This is important. If an ill-conceived application to develop, by a builder or individual, is submitted and not dealt with within two months, the applicant can proceed automatically.
5. Back up the local authority by bringing to its notice offences against the by-laws regulating advertisements, litter, and so forth.
6. See that the local authority allows advertisements only in accordance with the provisions of its scheme.

There, at any rate, is a plan of campaign. I wish I could think that it would be widely adopted. Unfortunately most people of sufficient intelligence to see the need for it are too busy with their own affairs to bother about local politics, or to seek election themselves; and the upshot is that we are still ruled in these matters by local tradesmen—excellent people, no doubt, but not necessarily the right people for this particular job.

Unfortunately, also, there is very little else we can do, though we may ease our conscience by subscribing to such admirable bodies as the National Trust and the C.P.R.E., both of which, as I have said, do their utmost to safeguard our heritage.

For the rest, there is the letter to *The Times*—at regular intervals it appears, appealing for funds to save this or that beauty spot, signed by the familiar list of eminent persons. Very pathetic those letters are, I think, for it is monstrous that they should be necessary. Why should private individuals be asked to buy off the profiteer simply because the community as a whole is too apathetic or too blind to see what is happening under its collective nose?

When, therefore, I suggest action by individuals through the local authorities, it is merely because that is the only way open to us at present.

It is an unsatisfactory way, this piecemeal dabbling at the problem. It leads to muddle, extravagance, and lack of unity, even when the local authorities are active. It delegates planning, incidentally, to men who often, however willing they may be, are completely untrained to deal with the problems which planning involves. It is, indeed, a miserably half-hearted counter-attack upon the ignorance and greed and folly which are filching our countryside from us. The issue, after all, is no small matter. The British Isles are at stake. If an invading army were occupying our hill-sides and lanes and shores, we should do something about it; and yet we allow an equally destructive and ruthless enemy to plunder our country treasures virtually without resistance.

Clearly it is a matter which concerns the State. We need most urgently a central authority with the widest powers to deal comprehensively with the task of preserving and beautifying and rebuilding and planning the countryside and towns of Great Britain. Town and Country Planning—the two are interlocked, obviously; the way is open for action on the largest scale, action which would increase our social wealth immensely, as Mr. Maynard Keynes has reminded us.

<sup>†</sup> Whether such action is likely to be initiated in the near future, I do not know. The opinions expressed by my political friends lead me to doubt it. To the ordinary citizen this seems fantastic; but as a nation we prefer individual muddling to State domination. So perhaps we must for the time being

resign ourselves to the slow evolution of the Town and Country Planning Act, doing all we can in the meanwhile to stir up and educate public opinion, chase the local authorities relentlessly and support the public-spirited bodies which are fighting on our behalf with relatively so little solid encouragement.

It is, I confess, a somewhat daunting prospect. Every day, every hour, some fresh depredation is being planned or carried out. Much of the best we have lost already; much of the rest we shall inevitably lose.

The fault is ours. We must shake off our apathy. We must mobilize. We must hammer away incessantly at truths so obvious that even politicians will eventually accept them and perhaps act upon them. For all those who have ears to hear, the tocsin has been sounded.





## *Quiet—A Physician Prescribes*

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LORD HORDER OF ASHFORD

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It will have become clear to the reader of this book, long before this section is reached, that the various amenities with which its pages deal are linked together, so that we have, to use a simile that has become topical, an 'Amenities Front.' The preservation of this Front has become a vital matter in the public interest. If a contributor may be allowed to pay a tribute to his editor, I should like to say that the conception of this book, and its painstaking and patient completion, seem to me to make a not unimportant contribution to this ideal.

The preservation of the Amenities Front is vital for two reasons: First, because the conditions of modern life make it more important than ever before that we should do all we can to counteract the results of hustle and anxiety and competition. And it is vital because the fear connected with international insecurity exercises such a paralysing effect upon so many of the movements designed to increase human health and happiness, that it is essential we should combat this fear.

It has become a truism that this is the age of the machine. Also that instead of the machine relieving us of toil and trouble it has tended to increase both of these. Indeed, much of the time we gain by the use of one machine is breathlessly expended in inventing others. Moreover, though machines increase our possessions out of all proportion to our capacity to use them, up till now we have invented no machine which will distribute the products of the other machines, so that these products lie about in useless heaps, to rust and to rot, to a large extent out of reach of those of us who need them most. Not only does this apply to food, that most basic and

essential element in the daily preservation of our lives, it applies also to the elements which go to the maintenance of bodily comfort and spiritual health. And since 'Man does not live by bread alone,' the latter are just as necessary in our consideration for human welfare, the welfare of the whole man, as is the food which nourishes the body.

Nor does our combined wisdom seem able to get us out of this difficulty: the distribution problem remains the one which cries out loudest for solution. We travel faster and faster, but the journey becomes less and less purposeful. We multiply devices by which to save time, but the most we do with the time we have saved is to make more devices by which we may save still more time. 'What are you saving time *for*?' I recently asked an American friend. 'To save *more* time,' he replied. The great service rendered by the amenities is that they tend to check all this stupid bustle. They cater for the personality of the individual and encourage its development. They discourage the collecting of men and women into mobs; and mobs, lacking any permanence, lack also the power to make any contribution to human progress. More than this, mobs tend to revert to primitive emotions, and are thus at all times anti-social.

The amenities, taken together, were beginning to make life happier for us. Even politicians, urged thereto by kicks from behind as well as by pulls from in front, were becoming almost statesmanlike in their efforts to achieve popularity on this possible front, whilst the improved economic position seemed to make many new and good things contribute in the same direction. Despite recurrent disappointment the amenities will assuredly yet do great things for us if we have the courage and the poise necessary to enlarge and intensify them. But there is a dangerous tendency to 'ca' canny' in their direction in order that we may spend all our time, and all our efforts, in preparing to defend ourselves against a possible enemy. But though such preparedness is imperative—or so the great majority of us think—it is surely courting the very catastrophe that we wish so ardently to avert if, as a nation, we give

ourselves up to pure militarism and call a halt in the march of social progress. The temporary and limited objectives governing the policies of certain nations challenge not only individual freedom but also challenge most of the efforts that may be made towards human betterment. If we *must* 'feel the touch on the right,' if we *must* defend ourselves, our hearths, and our homeland, we shall do it much better if we are free men and women, with ideals and a purpose, than if we are slaves. But what is even more important is the fairly certain fact that if we continue to cultivate our individualities and to pursue this important quest of the healthy mind in the healthy body, we may maintain our equilibrium as a nation and defer the threatened catastrophe until the fever in other nations, and the delirium which accompanies the fever, have subsided.

Bound up with, and inseparable from, this hustle that has caught us all, and the machinery to which we have become the slaves, is the collecting of ourselves into masses which we call cities. Intensity of production acts centripetally. This means that fresh air and sunshine, upon which nature made our bodies and our minds to a large extent dependent for proper growth and proper functioning, are reduced to a minimum and are in some cases actually non-existent. It also means that large groups of us get stifled by the smoke from the machines and cannot escape from the noise inherent in their operation. It is true that both of these nuisances can be abated, and can be made tolerable, if we take some pains about them. But very little, if any, pains are in fact taken, because it is as yet nobody's particular business, and the resistance against these enemies to health and to peace is too feeble to be effective.

We have in this country a number of 'captains of industry' who are possessed of tremendous driving power. Their dynamic personalities are a great social and national asset. But only here and there do we see one of them wise enough and humanist enough to spend a portion of his genius for organizing production in also organizing the distribution of the profits which result from the labours of those whom he employs.

This distribution of profits is, of course, the problem of Socialism stated in non-aggressive and non-revolutionary terms. The Communist denies that any solution of the problem can come except through the disruption of existing society. The democrat considers that a solution can be found in individual action and without disruption. If capitalists would only see that the amenities provide a field upon which a bloodless battle may be fought, with human betterment as the prize, the rancour that must inevitably accompany 'man's inhumanity to man' would die of sheer inanition.

One of the amenities for which some of us have for the past three years been pleading is QUIET. Noise has increased tremendously of late years, whereas our capacity to absorb it without prejudice to our health and our happiness has probably diminished. As in the case with the amenities in general, therefore, it becomes a doctor's duty to point out the position and to try to do something about it.

In much the same way as there have arisen conglomerations of human dwellings, huddled together without design or plan, starving people of light and of air and spreading disease, so there has come upon us, as the result of increased motor-traffic, increased transport, aeroplanes, and louder forms of amusement, a spate of uncontrolled noise for the suppression of which we must organize ourselves. It is as necessary that we be saved from the nerve-racking effects of noise as it is that we secure air and light and freedom from infectious diseases.

The argument that our nerves are resilient and can adapt themselves to all this din is, as I have often before pointed out, fallacious. Noise doesn't kill us as foul air and typhoid and diphtheria do. But it does wear down the nervous system, which is the master stuff of our bodies, and it does stultify our spirit, which is supposed to be the element in us which marks us off from the beasts which perish and which can alone give us the mastery over life. There are plenty of other stresses and strains in life which make their demands upon us and which we cannot escape. Why ask our nerve stuff to stand this

additional strain, so much of which is the result of thoughtlessness, of selfishness, and of stupidity?

It was considerations like these which led some of us, three years ago, to organize a concerted effort to check needless noise, and to found the Anti-Noise League. The word 'anti' was perhaps unfortunate. It savours somewhat of kill-joys and cranks. Our movement has, I trust, nothing in common with either of these. It is not really an 'anti' movement in the sense that it denies folk having, or enjoying, a good thing. Far from it, it is, in its essence, a constructive and a protective movement, for it aims at the conservation of nervous energy. It economizes human effort. Whenever the human brain operates creatively, whether in thought only, or in translating thought into action—and this field includes the best work of which men and women are capable—the elimination of needless noise is of incalculable benefit.

The main purpose of this movement to control noise is educational. It aims at pointing out the deleterious effects of noise, investigating the causes of noise and the means of dousing it, and it seeks to persuade the citizen to protect himself and others against a growing menace.

In regard to every amenity there are two groups of persons recognizable. There is the group which is already endeavouring to foster the amenity, or, if not yet alive to its importance, only needing its importance to be pointed out in order to be helpful. And there is the group which is anti-socially or even criminally minded on these, as on other matters affecting the community. The progress of society may be measured by the relative sizes of the two groups. We are sometimes asked to treat all noisy folk as though they belonged to the second group. But we believe that we shall do more eventually by securing intelligent, individual action than by policing people into a state of sullen quietness.

The League is nudging the police in certain directions where the law already has power, and the offender seems incorrigible; but for the most part it finds a more fruitful field in encouraging the well-mannered citizen to become noise-conscious.

All the best things in public opinion are, in the last analysis, found to be matters of good manners—a consideration for the comfort and happiness of others. Ancient taboos were determined by the safety of the tribe; modern taboos are determined by the good taste and the health of the individual. We don't spit on the pavement, and we don't blow our noses without a handkerchief in the office or the drawing-room. If culture is to flourish, this is not enough. It should be possible to educate public opinion to an instant and effective reaction against, say, an unnecessary clatter of plates in a hotel or to the slamming of the door of a motor car outside the house at night. 'A gentleman makes no noise,' says Emerson, and no one made it more clear than he did that the artisan is quite as capable of being a gentleman, or the converse, as is the aristocrat. Of course, the Noise Control Movement (I prefer to call it that) can only make its true appeal to the intelligent, for it has nothing spectacular to offer—nothing of the free-gift type. The members of the League shout no slogans, wear no badges, and are indifferent as to the colour of their underwear.

All the same we are citizens, and we have our work to do. We refuse to be exploited. We refuse to have our nerves and our comfort massacred by the bludgeonings of this thing which is excused in the name of Progress. We refuse to have our sleep murdered by those who, able to spend their own days in bed, make our nights hideous. It is not 'night starvation' that spoils our sleep, but the laceration of our nerves by car exhausts and loud speakers. 'It's a long worm that has no turning,' but some of us have turned, at last, and we are already justified by the results.

As I have already hinted, repressive legislation is not likely to take us very far in our campaign against needless noise. Planning ahead, so as to remove the causes of noise—this is far more promising. By-laws which are so framed in good time to act preventively do not conflict with already entrenched vested interests and so are unprovocative. Such far-sighted planning should, therefore, be enlisted in the service of this cause.

Commercial interests, already alert and with ears to the ground, should be encouraged in well doing. Things have been done in this direction, astonishing things. When, for example, did motor car manufacturers first commend their latest products to the public as 'SILENT'? When they took note of the fact that the anti-noise campaign was beginning to gain public sympathy and support. Other examples could be given. The crusade needs one thing to achieve its purpose: it needs groups of working people who have the sanity to revolt against din each in their own locality, and the pertinacity to make their revolt felt.

And so for all the amenities. No man or woman, however bent upon their brothers' and their sisters' welfare, can *make* them healthy or happy if they don't desire to be so. There must be the will to these ends as well as an organization to render help.

## *Amenities and the State*

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G. M. TREVELYAN

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IN the matter of the preservation of the beauty of rural England, what we need is a State policy, the support of the Ministry, of Parliament, and of legislation. At present, with the exception of the admirable activities of the Ancient Monuments Department of the Office of Works, which are confined to the ruins of old houses and churches, the State washes its hands of the whole business, although its own system of taxation is one of the chief causes of the destruction of beauty.

In old days the refusal of the State to concern itself with questions of amenity was natural, because the ordinary development of the country did little harm to beauty; and the citadels of rural beauty—parks, woods, country houses—scattered thickly over the land, were kept up by individual owners. Now the development of motor traction turns every 'beauty spot' into an 'eligible building site,' and the State by its taxation forces owners to sell, while at the same time it refuses to control the evil consequences of the sales of private property which its financial policy compels. The State is Socialist enough to destroy by taxation the classes that used to preserve rural amenity; but it is still too Conservative to interfere in the purposes to which land is put by speculators to whom the land is sold.

A characteristic performance of the State is the Ribbon Development Bill. The evil is well known and admitted by all. It is not only destructive of the beauty and dignity of the country, but it is socially undesirable that houses should be strung along the whole length of the country's roads,



instead of being grouped in villages. But the State will neither forbid building in undesirable situations near the road without compensation, nor will it find the compensation money. It has simply, by its Bill, flung the problem at the head of the unfortunate local authorities, and washed its hands like Pilate. The local authorities in nine cases out of ten have not the money to compensate wayside owners, and without compensation have no power to prevent undesirable building. Regional and town plans are made, often with great pains and ability, but cannot be carried out because there is not the compensation-money. Everywhere we see ribbon development going on, and on it will go till our roads are streets—unless the State will face the problem instead of playing with it.

Similarly, nothing is done about National Parks, because the Treasury and the politicians, by an old Victorian tradition, now wholly out of date, regard amenity as a thing on which public money ought not to be spent. National Parks in England would not, of course, mean the same thing as National Parks in America or Africa, where great wildernesses can be reserved as parks before mankind has settled in them at all. We are two thousand years too late for that policy in England. Our system must now be different. If the Lake District, for instance, were turned into a National Park, ownership would be undisturbed, and agriculture and sheep-farming would continue as it does now. Indeed, the farms are part of the beauty of the landscape. Only the rights of owners to develop their properties would be limited by certain regulations, to ensure the preservation of the characteristic beauty of the Lake District, and compensation would be paid to the owners. Such a scheme would be of limited cost to the Treasury. The equivalent of the amount of money now annually spent on the upkeep of parks in great cities would go a long way to supply the nation with great playgrounds of natural beauty all over the island. As soon as people care enough about it to pay for it, it can be done.

I am not a fanatic in these matters. I fully realize that this is a small island full of folk, and that the prime needs of

industry, housing, and defence have to be met, often at the expense of natural beauty. But in disputes and bargains between these rival interests, the interest of amenity is unduly handicapped. It is not officially represented in Government departments; it is only when a protest is raised in the newspapers that the departments occasionally throw it a bone.

Thus, in the matter of planting trees. In old days it paid best to plant hardwoods. Now it often pays best to plant conifers—at least, the return is quicker. Therefore, both individual owners and the State through the Forestry Commission plant very few hardwoods. In a hundred years' time, to a large extent in fifty years, the beauty of England would be only half what it is now from that cause alone. Look at any typical English landscape other than pure moorland, and see if its beauty is not mainly dependent on the hardwood trees. Well, they fall; and when they fall they are not now being replaced. Almost every new plantation one sees is conifer. The only remedy is that both individuals and the State should deliberately plant more hardwoods. There is no use abusing the Forestry Commission, which makes about as many concessions to amenity as its commission from Government allows—for example, its recent agreement to keep out of the heart of the Lake District and to consult the C.P.R.E. in other places. What is wanted now is that Government should modify its policy and charge the Forestry Commission with the business of planting more hardwood and allow it to acquire land suitable for that purpose. At present it is much restricted by its orders from so doing. It is for the nation to decide what sort of forests it wants to plant.

But in any case the Forestry Commission can't maintain the small plantations and coppices and hedgerow timber. That can only be done by private owners, small and big. What we want is that they should feel it a duty to posterity to put in hardwood trees, even if it be only a few, to mitigate the inevitable deterioration of the English landscape in the future. 'When ye hae naething else to do, ye may be aye sticking in a tree; it will be growing, Jock, when ye 're sleeping.'

Lay not that flattering unction to your souls that the National Trust is solving the problem of rural amenity. It has indeed made great headway in the last few years, but even now it owns only some 60,000 acres, with 10,000 more protected by its covenants. What are they among so many? Recently a patriotic owner gave a strip of five miles of Cornish coastline to the Trust. That is good, and there are a few more such cases. But elsewhere, with appalling speed, the coast-line of England is being desecrated and its majestic and lovely beauty is being destroyed for ever. Nothing but action by the State or local authorities can save the coast line on a large scale.

Yet in the meantime the C.P.R.E. and National Trust do what they can, and through them the patriot can do something at least to save the beauty of his country, until the State has been aroused to do its duty. A thousandth part of a loaf is better than no bread. I would particularly commend the practice, which recent legislation has rendered possible, of owners placing lands under covenant, either with local authorities or with the National Trust. By these covenants lands can be placed out of the shot of the jerry-builder and exploiter for all time to come, into whatsoever hands the lands may pass. The owner does not, under this system, give up ownership or the rents. But he forgoes further development value and prevents himself and his heirs from selling it as building land. This arrangement is proving more and more attractive to owners who care for particularly beautiful pieces of the land they own.

## *The Suburban Scene*

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JOHN GLOAG

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MOST of the approaches to the problem of town planning are clogged with preconceived notions, complicated by vested interests, and embittered by the unending controversy between young men with a taste for continental logic and old men with a gift for obstruction. The only problems that are solved quickly and even ruthlessly are traffic problems; for if fuming knots of congestion are giving trouble to the police, authority cuts a way out of it, almost at once, and if by some quickly slashed by-pass a gush of traffic is allowed to destroy for ever the quietude of some sheltered square or terrace, authority seems to grudge even sympathy, although a little or even a lot of it would not affect the rates. But all these troubles which attend planning, re-planning, or un-planning the residential belts that increase the unhealthy obesity of our cities arise from the fact that an unacknowledged revolution is in full swing. If we acknowledged this revolution, examined its ambitious aims, realized the extent of the job the revolutionaries were trying to tackle, and then saw to it that the results were comfortably nationalized and made fit for English people to live with, we should in a generation pass from an age of exasperating confusion to a quieter and more comfortable civilization.

Unfortunately we do not regard the people who are making this revolution as revolutionaries. They are not unshaven men shouting for blood and stoning beautifully dressed and blandly cynical aristocrats. They are often palely earnest youths, with neglected flannel trousers and pullovers, worn back to front to show as little of the necktie as possible, and an

indisputable talent for boring the unconverted. The revolutions that are not labelled by the trumpet voices of spectacular leaders are seldom identified by the people who are taking part in them. Only their descendants can classify and analyse the nature and attempt to isolate the causes of the particular revolution that has affected civilization.

In the early days of the industrial age, the inventors, backers, passive population, and irritated landowners were unaware of the fact that revolution had entered their lives. Only when some invention threatened an ugly swiftness of change that meant economic death for some class of worker, did the traditional symptoms of revolution occur, and machine-breaking riots would make apprehensive English gentlemen hear the rumble of the tumbrils, though the rumble of the Machine Age getting under way escaped their ears. The industrial revolution went on, and its makers and victims died in ignorance of its nature. Because of their ignorance it was not conducted according to any plan. It grew anyhow. In due time critical reactionaries appeared, and two of them were great men—John Ruskin and William Morris. They accomplished confusion, and founded a harmful snobbery about machinery which endures to this day.

The revolution in which we are taking part is being penned and curbed, and the visible sections of it denounced, by reactionaries everywhere. In politics most European countries are trying to swallow a dose of Cromwell mixture; but the Englishman's gift for being able to deal with hifalutin hysteria by saying to putative dictators 'Come off it, guv'nor!' and his fortunate inability to regard uniforms with reverence may preserve civilization, and enable the unacknowledged revolution to proceed unchecked by organized persecution.

There is a clean new world awaiting us just round the corner, and it is not likely to be attained by any of the fashionable faiths current to-day. The Communists and the Fascists and the older political parties can only think in political terms. Thinking in political terms and behaving like a politician mean that the mind must be closed to thoughts that are outside the

party faith. The good party man knows that the facts must be edited to suit the policy; that the problem must be dealt with by applying *belief*. And this laying on of hands that emerge from the red or black shirt-sleeves of the extremists, or from the more elegant cuffs of the accomplished politician who belongs to the only club in England without licensing restrictions, is unlit by any reasonable consideration of the merits and demerits of any case; it is an act of faith, a barren indication that attention has been paid to the matter raised—and there the matter ends.

A casual disregard of individual and human claims is now characteristic of the political and financial masters of the world. Liberty of speech and thought is shot down and beaten up in some countries; but in England and in America the small, comfortable liberties and pleasures are suppressed or interfered with. A recent example in England was afforded by the rulers of the banks at Christmas 1934, when the temporary convenience of bank cashiers was considered to be more important than the pleasure of thousands of children. The Mint was instructed to produce new pennies in dull bronze, so that the demand for bright new pennies should be eliminated, a little trouble saved at bank counters, and thousands of Christmas stockings rendered less sparkling and joyful. No medieval tyrant would have been quite such a pettifogging Herod as the banker who ordered that slaughter of innocent pleasure.

At any abnormal time the Puritan beast springs from its lair in England and rends some freedom. It fights good fellowship and hospitality with such regulations as the 'no treating' ordinance that came into force in the early days of the Great War, and which most people have now forgotten, although it was a monumental act of pointless repression at the time. It fights for the continuance of any legislation which prevents people from a full and unhampered enjoyment of the land they live in. It leers innuendo at healthy recreation; and it senses (for it is without understanding) the growth and the coming power of the unacknowledged revolution; and it is

afraid, for an incidental accomplishment of the revolution may be the cure of the causes of puritanism.

The suburban scene is conditioned not only by the peculiar ingredients of our national temperament, but by the staggering change in the scale of life during the last hundred and fifty years, and by what has happened to the city.

We draw the personnel of our governing authorities from the less enterprising sections of the community. The type of mind that likes to sink deep into the cushions of officialdom is not sufficiently alert to appreciate changes in the scale of life during the growth of the unacknowledged revolution, or to discern changes that are foreshadowed by the results of this revolution. Such minds, no matter whether their preoccupations are artistic, political, or educational, search history for precedents, and stretch superficial resemblances between events in the past and tendencies in the present until they have erected a structure of precedents, which as a composition is hopelessly ill-proportioned; but to them it has symmetry, a darkly definite order; and it is all cemented with a misleading phrase: 'History repeats itself.' But change of scale should be apprehended before the character and the probable consequences of the unacknowledged revolution in England and America are discussed. Before attempting to assess the present situation or to look forward, we should glance at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and do some comparative measuring with personal units, the better to secure a living sense of proportion.

My grandfather was born in 1798 and my father in 1835. I was four years old when the twentieth century began, and my son, who was born in 1930, may live to see the year 2000. My grandfather was a seafaring man, and there was not much difference in the life he led from that led by any sailor in the eighteenth or seventeenth centuries, or in the first, second, third, and fourth centuries, when the Western world was linked up with commercial interests under the government of the Caesars. Within five years of his birth a steamship was panting and splashing on the Forth and Clyde canal in

Scotland, an event that was to change the whole character of his calling in less than a century, and before he came of age steam traction was being denounced by God-fearing, right-thinking gentlemen who were quite unaware of the world to which they were being committed by the machines they were condemning.

By the time my father came of age the world had acquired railways, and was beginning its dependence upon locomotive machines; but still there was less difference between the conditions attendant upon his life and those of a Roman citizen in the last centuries of the Western Empire than there is between his life and mine. A gulf of time, seventeen centuries deep, separated him from the Roman citizen. A gulf of mechanism separates him from me; and the separation is not simple, like the measurable distance of centuries; it is a complex separation, social, economic, and ethical. As for my grandfather, with his two years of life in the eighteenth century and his voyages under sails—he is as remote as the Stone Age, as remote, perhaps, as my son's later life may be from mine, for we appear to be committed to change although not necessarily to what is called or thought to be progress.

My father and I had certain parallel activities, although our professions were different. He was a lawyer, and every day he went to an office in Lombard Street, London. We lived in Wandsworth, and in the summer he would go down to Battersea Pier, part of the way on a horse bus, and from Battersea Pier he would take a steamer to Blackfriars or London Bridge and walk to his office. In the winter he would go by train. It took him a long time, but going by water was a pleasant experience which is now denied to me.<sup>1</sup> But although I live further out of London, I am taken to my office in fifty minutes by a bus or motor coach—vehicles which are infinitely more comfortable than the pre-war private motor car—or if I want to knock ten minutes off my journey, I get into the Underground half-way to my office. It is not the dark, sulphurous, grimy Underground my father knew; it

<sup>1</sup> In 1936.



is part of the most progressive electric railway system in the world, and its cars are clean, swift, soothingly illuminated, and exceedingly luxurious compared with pre-War standards or with those accepted by passengers on the New York Elevated or Subway. In his office my father communicated with his partners and his staff by speaking-tube. The typewriter was infrequently used. Clerks wrote letters by hand in an approximation to copperplate. The carbon copy for duplicating correspondence had not yet replaced letter copying presses. The girl shorthand typist was a rarity. Office boys established communication with the outer world. The telephone was still an unusual toy. The internal house telephone was unknown. In superficial apparatus for getting work done I am far more fortunate than my father.

In the seventies he visited the United States. It took him over a fortnight to get there. New York as he saw it was not unlike a nineteenth-century English city, save that its plan was simpler. There were no tall buildings. The Statue of Liberty was then in the pious intention stage, for the French people had not yet made that gift to the American nation, and the Americans had not yet begun to foot the annual bill for its upkeep on Bedloes Island. (He brought back a little book of views of that vanished New York, before its church spires were quenched by gigantic shadows, and when they still punctuated the city's skyline.) In 1934 I visited the United States. My Atlantic voyage took six days, and New York was an entirely different city from that which my father looked upon. It is doubtful whether in the whole history of city architecture such creative changes have come about in the space of fifty years, nor would they without the invention of that vertical locomotive—the elevator.

Machines are now controlling the mobile life of many cities, and certainly in New York people are individually conscious of the part they have to play if they are to exist in the company of machines. In America mechanical vehicles are not resented as they are, perhaps subconsciously, in England. Emotionally the Englishman is still in the horse-and-cart age. For a

quarter of a century or more *Punch* has had, if not weekly, at least with great frequency, a motorist *versus* pedestrian joke, always barbed against the motorist. Before the War there was far more active resentment against machines in England than there is now. The resentment took the queer form of assuming that certain types of unusual machine would never be any good. The remarks made about early aviation sound strangely in one's ears to-day. Quite intelligent people with all the confidence that prejudice and dislike could impart to their pronouncements would say that the conquest of the air was a dream. When, in 1908, H. G. Wells produced a far-sighted forecast of the military possibilities of the aeroplane in his romance, *The War in the Air*, it was regarded as a sort of 'penny blood' rather than as a logical examination of an appalling danger to contemporary cities and their inhabitants. Wells portrayed an air-raid on New York by German airships in that book; within seven years of its publication bombs were being dropped on London by Zeppelins.

To-day we admit the possibilities and dangers of machines, and those who perceive that mobile machines are destroying traditional conceptions of security, both in a military and a civic sense, are reluctant to admit that the Machine Age demands new, untried forms of life in cities and in the country. Many people who can afford to do so have become experts in the art of escaping from contemporary conditions. But new ideas are abroad about the sort of life it is desirable to lead. There is in the modern movement a fresh outlook upon the way in which accommodation should be planned, a completely new outlook upon all activities connected with design.

A new world is being prepared and it will be ready when we acknowledge the Machine Age instead of running away from it; and that promised world of open cities and rich countryside, healed of industrial scars, would have perplexed and worried my father, whose world was the nineteenth-century world of disguise and façade, although it would have been perfectly appreciated and understood and enjoyed by my grandfather, who was born in the last golden age of design.

This age of muddle and confusion is only an age of transition; but it is a stimulating age and I would not change it with any other age, not even with the Golden Machine Age that, I hope, awaits my son. I would rather live in the middle of the fight to get the best ideas of the modern movement applied to life than I would in its days of suave achievement, as I would rather have lived in the London of Wren and Evelyn, lit by the scientific and artistic valour of their contemporaries, than amid the sleek urbanities of Horace Walpole's London.

Unfortunately nobody has any very clear idea about the sort of life that will be lived in the Golden Machine Age. Nobody quite knows for what form of society the modern movement is making ready. But I suspect the visions of those earnest youngsters whose sense of comfort has not yet developed, and whose vivacious and strenuous recreations range from the conversational shambles of cocktail parties to the rigours of camping out, who cheerfully accept the idea of regimentation, go on a conducted tour to Russia, and thereafter bow their heads at the name of Lenin. Such enthusiasts represent a small but well-advertised proportion of the designers who are preparing, in their various technical ways, for the promised land where every roof is flat and every wall open to the eyes of the world. They have acquired the crystal-cell complex from that Calvin of architecture, M. Le Corbusier. Innumerable, fresh, sprouting fancies in imaginative minds must have been frostbitten by the spurious logic of that phrase, 'A house is a machine for living in.'

That imported formula is wholly out of harmony with English ideas of home-making. But it reflects some aspects of the character of the Commercial Machine Age. Many people respond to this doctrine, at least superficially. Since the War there has been intensive propaganda about labour-saving in the home, organized chiefly by firms who had something to sell that was alleged to save labour; but although a lot of complicated apparatus was foisted on to the public, there was a lot of common sense distributed, too, and many well-planned appliances for reducing housework gave house-

wives an appetite for extra leisure that made a house that ran as smoothly as a machine seem very desirable. To young married couples the austerity of 'a machine for living in' will not be immediately apparent.

Now what is to be said for the flat, for the group of apartments in a big block of buildings? So many of these blocks suggest by their appearance that if you blew a whistle all the front doors would open and convicts reciting their numbers aloud would appear on every balcony. I am not putting a case for disguising blocks of flats. Disguise is as deplorably silly as a refusal to be imaginative when one is handling modern materials. It must be admitted, of course, that a refusal to be imaginative is often caused by inability to be anything but dull. But are these fierce utilitarian experiments really adapted for people who have any delight in living, any regard for comfort, or anything but the crudest materialistic outlook?

To the young middle-class generation, that has not yet learned how to be comfortable, the flat that is a cellular statement of utility may seem ideal. Other people may be repelled by the idea of parking themselves in such places; they may insist on the house with its surrounding garden, or its strip, back and front, or failing a comfortable modern alternative they may fall for the great neo-Tudor blocks of flats that disguise their character under the imperfectly copied trappings of the Elizabethan manor. But from flats rather more than from houses the public expects greater value for its money in the way of service appliances, whatever external appearance may suggest, and every block of flats will have to make some concessions to the 'machine for living in' ideal, at least in apparatus.

The tenements which may replace England's slums in time are in a different economic category from flats. They will be well- or ill-equipped according to the political views of the municipal bodies mainly responsible for their erection. If the plumbing is inadequate, it will be due to the ideas of people who for years have been saying: 'Don't give the brutes bathrooms, they keep coals in the bath.' We have passed out of the period when people in what are known as

'responsible positions' would have publicly stated that the slums ought to be retained as slum-dwellers did not know how to live in decent surroundings; but our municipal authorities nearly always err on the mean side when the rehousing of slum-dwellers is planned.

The small service flat has been made possible by the dissolution of the old, binding family loyalty which kept the middle class in acrimonious association until marriage or death parted its members. The business girl prefers to share a flat with some other girl who has a job; the alternative is a boarding-house, or the horrors of a hostel, where the English contempt for cooking finds its grimmest depths. The young married couple discover that a service flat enables them to run a car. The best consumers in the industrial state are probably flat-dwellers. They are urged by the setting of their lives to be more active; to patronize the standardized entertainments of Hollywood; to streak along the great traffic roads, down to the sea and back, in a haze of fuel fumes; and, when they sit at home, to quarrel over bridge while the loud speaker contributes sexual symphonies to the amenities of indoor life. An increase in affluence may mean a week-end bungalow by the sea or a country cottage later on, but only for a few. Movement occupies their leisure, and a quiet garden, the sound of trees, and the scent of flower borders, or the peace of a library, are treasures unknown to the active children of the Commercial Machine Age.

Already big new blocks of flats have their own car parks and garages, the latter often accommodated below tennis courts or gardens, and the mobility that motoring has brought to thousands of people tends to minimize their criticism, and even to obliterate their consciousness, of restricted space in their homes. That the absence of a garden is not felt is perhaps best illustrated by the lack of any attempt to grow flowers by the flat-dwellers of to-day. The window-box, a cheerful and lovely device, has almost passed away. Even though no provision is made for flower boxes in the great new blocks of flats that everywhere upraise their shining bands of windows, tenants could easily supply the deficiency; but they don't.

Are flats, modern or mixed traditional, to be the chief feature of the suburbs in the future? The flat-dwelling part of the population may have lost its taste for gardens, but affection for a patch of soil of some sort is unquestionably an English characteristic. If you approach London by train or road or air and inspect its suburban belt from north, south, or west, and in Essex, from the east, you will see thousands and thousands of gardens, pathetically small most of them, but tended with pride, regarded obviously with something more than perfunctory notions of neatness; plots that are irrigated and fertilized by the affection of those repressed countrymen, the dwellers in the suburbs of London and other great cities.

Let those who write about and practise the modern movement, travel occasionally in crowded third-class carriages in the bowler-hat hours; and let them listen to the gardening chatter that seeps under the newspaper barriers that every man erects against a possible neighbour, until he recognizes a garden-lover. Let them visit a great English institution. Everybody talks about their gardens there; not, perhaps in the saloon bar, but certainly in the private bar; and the economic side of gardening struggles with horses in the conversational pattern of the public bar, the growing of vegetables, the size of beans and potatoes, the girth of marrows, the tentative hopes of food, saleable and edible, wrung from the soot-veiled earth of suburban England. I am not becoming tolerant of muddle and disorder; but I begin to understand that muddle and disorder can never be cured by cutting across the little precious by-ways and queer, beckoning lanes and romantic alleys of national character. The Englishman is always having sour experiments thrust upon him. His pleasures are curbed; his life is interfered with in little pettifogging ways; tyranny is exercised in uneven and obsolete regulations; and now and again Authority wakes up to the hopelessness of trying to suppress the natural taste of the people whose will has endowed it with power to govern. Even street betting, at present illegal, may be recognized. The things that make us the laughing-stock of the rest of the world,

the childish prohibitions, may be torn up. I have great faith in Mr. A. P. Herbert, the only member of the House of Commons, except Mr. Lansbury, who in modern times recognizes that people have something to do with their lives apart from shuddering at the crop of crises produced every few days by politicians.

Movements of all kinds, moral, fashionable, and scientific, have washed over the English people. The Evangelical movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century gave us moral restrictions and, perhaps as an aesthetic compensation, the varied riches of the Gothic revival. That was a religious movement: it was a way of thinking with its roots in a strict interpretation of Christian doctrine, and its potency was such that few departments of life, and life's chief mirror, architecture, escaped its rigours. The modern movement is a sort of religious movement; but it has tangled roots, some of them stained red in Russia; some of them just thin and wiry strands of common sense growing in the starved soil of hatred; some of them young and healthy and drawing nourishment from the noblest kind of impatience and from the noblest of all desires—which make men long to leave the world better than they found it.

Because of the suspicion of Communism that clogs some of the roots, the Germans have put the lid on the modern movement. The flat roof and clean, sweeping lines represent the 'art of the left.' There are no political implications about the modern movement in England, but it is interesting to examine the nature of the opposition it arouses. The rush-hour crowd, the real backbone of England, the people who talk about their gardens and frames and early-flowering wonders, hate the unfamiliarity of the modern movement. Why? They don't hate everything new. They like cars and aeroplanes and streamlined trains like the 'Silver Jubilee' and its locomotive the 'Silver Link.' It isn't blind prejudice. It isn't lack of education. It isn't just lack of taste.

Isn't it because the modern movement, the logical disposition of masses of homes, and the mechanistic clarity of modern blocks of flats and residential towers, suggest to the English

mind the thin end of the wedge of regimentation? The answer, the immediate and logical answer, is: 'Look at the soulless, packed suburban streets; miles of houses turned out with a hideous mechanical repetition, ugly, inconvenient, ill-planned, the most deplorably unimaginative massing of homes that incompetence could conceive and greed carry out.' Yes, but however poor, however grotesquely remote from a fine prototype, those rows and rows of houses represent homes; individual homes, recognizable by some little individual trick, different from anything that could suggest barracks.

I am not making a plea for the retention of those repellent, jerry-built, sham-Tudor houses that disfigure England; but I do suggest that the reason why people are happy in them, why they can take pride in them, is worth studying. You can't impose theories of living on the English. You may want to if you belong to political parties, either extreme right or extreme left, that have no tenderness for liberty; you may want to if you are an enthusiastic young architect with views about the way a home should be run; but in England you cannot design anything for an ideal society; you cannot presuppose an inclination on the part of the public to acclaim logic and convenience; you cannot, even by implication, order the English about, and insist that life has got to be lived in such and such a way.

The late W. R. Lethaby once wrote: 'No art that is only one man deep is worth much; it should be a thousand men deep.' The modernists are only one idea deep at the moment; it is a good idea; but they shouldn't regard the pattern of social life with the grim purposefulness of American police chiefs contemplating a gang clean-up. England and the English have too many precious and lovable things worth preserving for the ruthless disregard of tradition to triumph.

¶ The Golden Machine Age that is just round the corner will have suburbs that will suit the English character, for in another quarter of a century we shall have a smaller population and a glut of accommodation, and a lot of contemporary jerry-building will have fallen into ruin.



## *The Home Counties*

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SIR WILLIAM BEACH THOMAS

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THE worst weed in our antipodes is the cactus. It devastates tens of thousands of else lovely acres. If any bit of a leaf falls it strikes root and starts a new colony; even if hung up on a wire fence it will send roots downwards, and so swallow up the fence. Very much in the same way bits of the Wen (as Cobbett, that great countryman, usually called London) separate themselves, and appear in unlovely colonies here, there, and anywhere in the Home Counties, fondly so called. Does not Charles Lamb talk of 'homely Hertfordshire'? Even the charming, quiet, restful, comfortable farmhouse where he stayed when the adjective came into his head has a growth of these urban, Wen-like weeds coming almost up to its doors. One of the residents in these new growths received a letter addressed to the 'Buglow.' The correspondent was not perhaps so illiterate as he was thought to be. The word may be worth preservation alongside Dean Inge's 'bungaloid.' It is at worst suggestive. One house in the neighbourhood was built in exactly a fortnight. In another district an architect wandering melancholy, like Marius in the ruins of Carthage, saw the foundations (with apologies for the word) being laid for one of these cactus dwellings. Rubble was tipped into the perfunctory trench, some cement scattered on the top, and then watered with a hose. Such dwellings set haphazard about country roads go one better than Rome: they are built in a day, and will perish within a year or two, reducing the country to a dustheap like the outer parts of Galway or Constantinople, which are the two most melancholy towns that ever I saw.

Alongside the new colony which is in my mind at the moment, is a pleasant heath where you could always be quite sure of hearing the nightingale. The thick hedgerow, like a little spinney sheared down, is now deserted. The nightingale, we fancy, cannot endure the waste paper and cigarette cases which are the slot of the urban migrant. His literature, as Lewis Carroll used to say, is spelt with two t's. *Littera scripta manet*. It is very hard to get rid of printed offal. That is one picture of the later idea of building Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land and of the substitution of a 'jerry-builders' Jericho,' whose walls will need less than the sound of a trump and a sevenfold peregrination for their collapse. And the grim picture (which I propose to hang beside a much more cheerful canvas) is not yet complete. At the foot of the valley below these little Wens, these unpleasant pimples, runs a pleasant stream which still, as in Spenser's day, 'oft doth lose its way.' It has been a glorious haunt of flower, fish, butterfly, and even otter. The last time I visited one favourite reach a dead dabchick was caught in some rubbish. The tall willow-herb was trampled down, and the pathways vulgarized with litter. 'The sedge is withered from the lake, and no birds sing.'

The dabchick will nest there no longer; nor will the trout devour mayfly, for there will be neither fly nor trout. Contamination has entered the blood-stream; the waters have been poisoned. Exactly how and why this poison has entered and made life impossible for the tenderer fish is subject of some dispute and doubt; and this is not the place for either dogma or discussion. It may suffice here and now to say that such contamination is the result of an unplanned or ill-administered development. The treatment of roads, the placing of factories, the treatment of effluent or offal are scientific subjects that have not had the advantage of any scientific treatment from any central authority. In practice, you are allowed to poison, to block, and to odorize. The air is poisoned as well as the water. In one of the loveliest villages of the Home Counties north of London, a place famous for its mill when the Domesday

Book was compiled, you may meet a smell that so catches your throat and offends your nose that you leave the apparent paradise as quickly as your feet or your wheels will permit. The invisible outrage is as severe as the visible. Two miles further up the stream, where the next mill was made some eight hundred years ago, an odour of equal virulence, though different quality, prevails. It is an offence to pass through it. How those who experience it daily endure the burden is beyond conjecture.

Let one other fact from a census of the same neighbourhood suffice, for this account of aesthetic phenomena in the Home Counties is not a jeremiad: it is rather a search for signs of betterment. One evil feature has been added to the landscape within the last ten years or so. Modern methods have accelerated the tempo, as the latest military politicians say, of the campaign. These dumps have no use for geological periods and the slow accretions of time. What was a plain of cultivated fields is now a hill visible from a good distance. It is crowned at one of its peaks by a forest of elder, which it is at least as difficult to penetrate as the dreaded primeval forests, for the undergrowth consists almost wholly of nettles and the more unlovely relics of domestic crockery and ironmongery, which co-operate with the obstinate boughs of the elders and occasional thorns. What was a farm became a dump, that has risen higher and higher, till it deserves the name of a hill. Here are deposited the refuse and offal of one district of the Wen.

Now the dump has certain attractions which it would not be wholly honest to deny or conceal. It has curious influences on animals and plants, and is freely colonized by both. Its flora and fauna are richer than any other hundred acres in the district. That curious weed, generally but wrongly called the 'deadly nightshade'—good name for a dump plant—finds its optimum of conditions on the dump; and it is peculiarly enjoyed by the pheasant. The birds will travel some distance further than usual for the pleasure of staining their beaks with the dulcet berries of this *dulcamara*, this *bittersweet*.

What is that curious cloud of birds that you may see even from the ambling one-track railway, which, like the stream running along the same valley, 'oft doth lose its way'? There are gulls among them, surprisingly far inland, and plover and rooks, with an occasional crow, and starlings in hosts. These strange companions have met to feed on the most lately tipped, most odoriferous matter from the Wen. They seem to know that they must get to work at once, for according to the latest and most excellent wise regulation, the offal must be covered with six inches of soil within twenty-four hours. This is a small example of better planning, and eventually the dump may be a thing of extra beauty, with its quaint hills and valleys (or humps and holes) and its various botany. When you walk across the dump at any passable place you discover, without need of any meticulous observation, both its virtues, so to say, and its vices or sins. Here is an elder draped in the purple of a Virginia creeper; but even as you approach the unwonted consorts an immense rat runs almost over your boot. The place is tunnelled with holes, with large holes and lesser holes. Both rabbits and rats, which seem to rejoice in the juxtaposition, abound as they abound nowhere else. With admirable public spirit, which other landowners might profitably imitate, the proprietors employ a man in the sole task of gassing rats. Yet the place is so favourable for the burrowing animals that the daily destruction does little more than prevent an increase of the infestation. As for the rabbits the welcome poachers work in vain, and some of those employed on the dump say that they can no longer bear the idea of eating such a creature. Many are diseased; but disease does as little as the snare to reduce the multitude. Infestation is perhaps a useful general description of what happens to those parts of England where administration is weak, and people are numerous. Every appealing common within reach of London or other big town is infested with rubbish, with litter. Even where villages are small the rubbish of tins and crocks is often tipped into any adjacent dip in the ground; and I know nothing that so completely shatters the charm of a country

walk as the hideous discovery of such a dump. There is now no excuse for such desecration, for the municipal rubbish carts are always available. What the country needs in this regard is penal treatment for dumpers. I know one lovely reach of river which flows through some 'six months' (or Lammas) land, most eloquent of English rural history. The stream itself is half choked with all sorts of jettisoned obstruction, and is further poisoned by effluents of tar. The hedgerow of the water meadow is defaced by tins and crocks and paper. If the wind is in the wrong quarter the whole is enveloped in an evil smell. Of all the surroundings of this lovely spot the best perhaps is a sewage farm, whose innocuous waters are delivered into the stream. It may be accepted as a strong argument in favour of planning that so unlovely a thing as a sewage farm, planted in this case much too near dwelling-houses, is superior to the rest of its neighbours; and if the weather is wet the sewage farm too pollutes the air.

The pollution of water, as of land, has a very definite influence on the natural animals. The first and surest sign of incipient poisoning is the death of the trout; and they die from a combination of mechanical and chemical poisoning. If the stream is arrested by rubbish or mudbanks, or even excess of weeds, whatever little poison filtrates into the water escapes slowly, and often accumulates. Until recently the millers did what they had done for a thousand years or so: took the clearing of the stream into their own hands. One of the operations (which I have watched with admiration) was to walk a heavy horse with a farm harrow behind him, or on occasion a looped chain, down the middle of the stream. Many, indeed most, of the old country mills have gone out of action, and the derelict dams and screens and unturned wheels and bypasses do more harm than good. With what a fine rush in older days the held-up waters would celebrate this sudden freedom, and rush down in a cleansing fervour! Next after the trout in sensitiveness is the fresh-water crayfish, a succulent animal, that grows much scarcer, but is still abundant in some streams of the Home Counties. That most murderous

beetle, the great dytiscus, and indeed asilius, appear to flourish in inverse proportion to the mayfly, which suffers more from mechanical than chemical faults. One of the most resistant is the silvery and bony dace; and all coarse fish are better strugglers for life than the trout. Perhaps they are so called for that reason, and not only the gourmet is responsible for the adjective. There are brooks and rivers in the Home Counties which represent almost all degrees of pollution. One of the best to look upon is almost lifeless. The owner of a fine country house on its banks, flanked by a garden glorious with exotic trees planted by the famous Hooker, made many efforts in behalf of the purity of the waters, but without success. The failure was due in part to the backwardness of science in this regard, but if the public cared enough they would soon both repopulate the waters and save the land from poisonous infestations.

Now it happens that within reach of some of the worst examples of extinguished grace, due, in some measure at least, to carelessness and the absence of plan, have risen two of the very few examples of a planned countryside: garden cities, so called, have come into being. One of the first steps taken by the organizers was to suggest a census of the furniture, so to say, of the place; of the trees, of the botany in general, and so far as might be of the birds and mammals. Such census, it was hoped, would be a preliminary to the preservation of the beauties. And it has been so, at least in some measure. The inhabitants enjoy their trees, and are alert to save their nightingales from banishment. They do not uproot the wild raspberries and anemones; they make themselves in some measure the guardians of their own rural wealth. These garden cities have helped to prove some things necessary for the preservers of country places. They have proved that factories may be brought into the country, to the great advantage of factory workers, without fouling the country. A good many *a priori* views, idealistic pictures, and too logical schemes have gone by the board. A symmetrical agricultural belt was planned. It was hoped that the city would eat bread composed chiefly

of local wheat flour. The 'unearned increment,' dear to the brains both of Henry George and Mr. Lloyd George, would flow into the community, which would one day find itself in possession of so much local wealth, from land values, from its own gravel, clay, sand, and water, that it would be rate free, would be enabled to spend a superfluity on the graces of life most dear to the community. It is all to the good that many dreams should be remembered on waking, and that there should be a striving after their fulfilment. If it has fallen below its first idealistic conception, the garden city is nevertheless a sufficient success to be welcomed by the countryman. It is a lovely thing, both inwardly and outwardly, compared with the 'development' of building estates at the edge of towns and villages. It is at any rate free of rubbish dumps, free of the thirst for felled trees. Barbed wire does not block the way where once the shade of elms and oaks welcomed the country walker. You see in the garden cities, and indeed in any of the more comely towns of the Home Counties north of London, the illustration of a fact emphasized long ago: the tame is better appreciated by wild animals than the wild. Birds, at any rate, if no other class of animal, prefer the neighbourhood of houses, if the houses have gardens. The richest haunt of birds is a country house well set about with trees and bushes. Such country houses—and they abound in the Home Counties—are sanctuaries indeed except for the larger birds of prey, which still suffer from the prejudices of both landowner and gamekeeper. After the country house, standing within its own spacious grounds, as the house agents say, the open village or township comes next. Birds certainly flourish in and about the garden cities of both Letchworth and Welwyn. Such comparatively rare birds as the hawfinch, and, in winter-time, the brambling, are common. The greater spotted woodpecker seems to rejoice in a sort of country that is almost town. It is, for example, a common visitor to gardens of some of the houses that have made the neighbourhood of Weybridge almost urban in some respects. It was pointed out by Buffon, that most classical naturalist, whom, as with other classics,

no one now reads, that in the east as in the west the virgin forest, so called, is abhorrent to many wild animals; and that they rejoice in the close neighbourhood of man. Swallows, martins, tits, and robins are multiplied greatly by the conversion of country into a *rus in urbe*. The open places of London itself, above all, Richmond Park, are paradises for birds, rare and common. The birds of London have attracted all the naturalists, and inspired some of the best prose of both Jefferies and Hudson. The Green Belt, of which a great deal is being heard, will greatly increase the bird population; and the idea coincides with the publication of a charming book on London birds by Mr. Lockley, a naturalist who made his name on an island off the west coast where he was the only dweller. Doubtless some less desirable birds are encouraged. Sparrows now migrate in tens of thousands to the harvest fields of the Home Counties, as also in Warwickshire. This Augustan departure is even more thorough than the exodus of society to Scotland or the seaside, and is synchronous. The owl is almost as fond of the town as the sparrow and ravages the nests of smaller birds in urban places, as it does not in the country. Such disturbance of the nice balance of nature that has prevailed in our happy land may demand attention in the planning that will be a necessity of our civilization if our land is to be saved in the Home Counties, and saved in districts remote from the great towns.

Changes in the physical development of the country have had curious effects on wild life, of which one or two may be worth our attention. A generation ago the birds delighted in the roads, which provided ideal dusting grounds. Some species, notably the yellow-hammer, became associated with the roads. There was even a wail from some observers that the yellow-hammer was growing extinct. The fact was that it was driven from the roads by tar and pitch. With a good many other birds it seeks its dusting bath, at any rate in one district, not on the black, shiny, unsympathetic roadway—adjectives that apply now to most of the smaller by-roads of the counties round about London—but on the railway, where



dust is still found beside the sleepers, and the trains are much less frequent than the cars. There is a yet preciser truth than when he wrote the wholly delightful poem, in Mr. E. V. Lucas's

We grant the poetry, the romance,  
But look behind the veil.  
Suppose that while the motor pants  
You miss the nightingale.

It is as much the duty of the town planners of to-day's to-morrow not to miss the nightingale, as not to disturb it; and this shy bird too rejoices in the open village, if its inhabitants are not altogether too fond of vagrant cats. If our highways were made with a generous fringe, if their cuttings and embankments were well bushed and treed, they would be sanctuaries, where in contrast with the tearing cars you might profitably practise 'the delicate and gentle art of never getting there,' and perhaps the blackbird's, even the blackcap's, liquid whistle would now and again reach the deaf ears of those who cultivate the coarse and vulgar practice of always going anywhere. The tale of destruction by motor cars differ in quality as time goes on. Fewer birds are killed, and more rodents, frogs, toads, and insects.

Well-designed verges to the roads would prove to be sanctuaries for flowers as well as birds and butterflies; and it is not a quite hopeless truism to say that nothing so much saves the wild flower as its multiplication!

One of the first country towns to inspire a 'Cautionary Guide'<sup>1</sup> was St. Albans, which is perhaps the best example of its kind in the Home Counties. What was bad in modern development and, with much less ease, what was good, were most persuasively presented. Since that ingenious pamphlet was written the city has been the scene of the very worst of all crimes in modern organization. A plan was made, a good plan, and in certain selected areas pleasant houses were built on the understanding that neighbours should not be too close, nor their dwelling-places forbidding. Presently the plan was

<sup>1</sup> Published by the Design and Industries Association.

changed under temptation. Such alteration is an example of what Plato called a 'sin in the soul,' and Bunyan found a religious synonym for the phrase. The hopes of rural England, at any rate in the neighbourhood of London, are based on planning; but the plan that is no plan (for future consistency is the essence of it) is worse than no plan: *corruptio optimi pessima*.

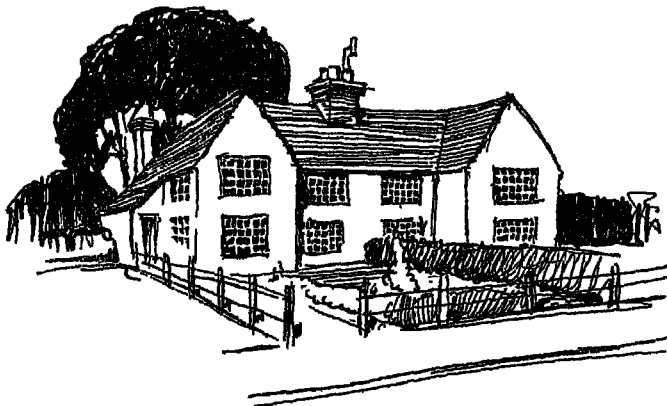
Development, in the house agent's sense, takes many forms. One may say that each county has its own form. Surrey, once almost the loveliest county in Britain, finds its worst enemy in the villa; Buckinghamshire, which is not altogether unlike it in experience, has lost much of its rusticity; but the amount of beech wood that has been saved is a creditable record; and at Ashridge, and indeed Berkhamstead Common, are some excellent examples of preservation. Hertfordshire has its pioneer garden cities, which must be judged a success with certain qualifications, but has really terrible examples of ribbon development, proceeding, so it seems, at an accelerated pace. The buildings, which are legion, are in hugger-mugger gobbets, even when not strung out in lines close to the road. Essex has its 'beauty spots,' with apologies for the phrase, but with Hertfordshire, it is the headquarters of some forms of intensive cultivation; and good agriculture, whatever its scenic disqualifications where glass is employed on a big scale, has a justification that must at least qualify aesthetic objections.

Surrey (and indeed Hertfordshire) is a county of commons, spacious and lovely, where grow heather, gorse, and bracken, thyme, tormentil, and harebells; where the short sweet grass is a delight to the foot as well as the eye. The worst foe to these commons are the urban motor cars. They pour out from London on Saturdays and Sundays, and leave litter that is more offensive than the relics of a gipsy caravan or even a tramps' meeting-place. Their broken bottles on occasion act as burning-glasses and fire the common. On all occasions their litter of cartons, peel, and paper are a grim offence, and their fires are frequent causes of arson. It seems a pity in many eyes that the lordship of the manor of many commons has been lately sold by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners

(their policy in that regard has changed of late) to local golf clubs. In one or two cases there has been some sort of rebellion against the dictatorial notices of the new lords; but it must be granted that almost the only commons in the country where any real attempt is made to regulate the litter lout and to clean up the trail of offal when he escapes the warden are those owned by golf clubs. It is a real rebuke that those who prize their powers as in some sort proprietors, and are the acknowledged guardians of its amenities, should be much less efficient than the players of a game who think first in terms of green and bunker.

Country places in the Home Counties are populous for two reasons: first, because of their easy access to urban motorists; second, because of the industrial migration from north to south, and in some places the decentralization of factories. This last is the chief ideal of the garden city pioneers. They wished first of all to make the life of industrial workers rural, out of hours. All the other sorts of disturber of rural peace need regulation. It is a curious thought that some of our loveliest southern country places were yet more full of people in almost prehistoric times than they are to-day; and the crowd did no damage, but only good service to rural beauty. If there is one place in the Home Counties that demands stricter preservation and conservation than others it is the Penn country of Buckinghamshire. In the middle of it Gray wrote an English poem that enjoys perhaps a wider circulation than any others. It is not supreme as poetry, but it is a masterly picture of the mood of a most English scene. Among those who have been active in demanding the preservation of the neighbourhood of Gray's country churchyard has been Mr. Fisher, our chief historian, and he has pointed out in an essay on the theme that the district was thickly populated, compared with to-day, long before London became a Colossus. Those early dwellers in Buckinghamshire left at least this message behind them, that a country may be all the better for the large number of people who enjoy it, if they love it. The trouble is that the week-end visitors and a great number of those who

live in the newer 'concrete mendacities,' or villa-nous excrescences, or bungaloid growths, and caused them to be erected, are by habit and occupation urban in sentiment and alien to the district. It is a liberal education in social and economic change to investigate such a historic village as Beaconsfield, where the new village by the railway and the old village a little withdrawn from it lie cheek by jowl, and the old beauty suffers slow suffocation. The one hope (beyond a change of soul among the invaders) seems to lie in regional planning on a scale as wide as the planning of rail and road. Englishmen have given England a peaceful beauty beyond comparison with its primal fens and forests. The village, the paddock, the hedgerow, the country house, the homesteads are of its essence. What man has made he should conserve, as he conserves a great picture or statue or cathedral. He destroys a work of art who defaces the river valleys or destroys the pillars of the trees, or fouls the general design by unworthy interruptions; and all these crimes are to the discredit of aliens incursive into the Home Counties.



# *The Plain Man looks at England*

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S. P. B. MAIS

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*Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis*

## I

UP till quite lately I have not been a user of the roads. In order to get to a place I used to travel by train, and having arrived at my destination I would immediately look for the nearest stile and lose myself among the green deserted fields.

Custom had inured me to the ugliness of railway stations. Until I saw the railway station at Washington, D.C., I took it for granted that architecturally stations must be ugly to conform with railway regulations. Aesthetically I knew that it was possible to vitalize their surroundings with flower-beds, and I hope that the person responsible for the suggestion that every year a prize should be awarded to the most colourful station flower-bed has himself been suitably rewarded.

But, with the coming of electricity, railway stations need no longer look dirty. With the increased sensibility of directors of publicity, railway stations have in some instances been raised to the status of cathedrals or bathing girls as inducements to travel.

But, while stations are beginning to improve, roads are getting quite staggeringly worse. I probably notice this more than most people, because of my very recent conversion to road travel.

I do not even now, nor ever shall, travel by my own private car, but I have taken several long journeys lately by bus.

There was a time when London finished soon after Hammer-smith. On a recent journey to Chester I found it took seventy minutes from Victoria bus terminus to the first green field.

Unless action is immediately taken, London's green belt will be outside the circle of a twenty-five mile radius, and only the rich and leisured will ever reach it. Uxbridge, that even up to last year retained some remnants of individuality, is now just part of the long suburban street that is indifferently labelled Southall, Acton, Ealing.

There is a short breathing space as you mount the hill to Gerrard's Cross, but once the common is passed notices remind you at hundred-yard intervals that a thousand acres of Bulstrode Park are now ready for immolation.

Part of Beaconsfield is miraculously saved, and Wycombe is honestly, if tawdrily, industrial.

The trouble begins, as it always does nowadays, where beauty can least bear disturbance. The whole side of the Chiltern escarpment that leads down to Aston Rowant is now honeycombed with hideous shacks thrown haphazard like splodges of mud against a hill-side once covered with trees.

The hut-dwellers both get the view and spoil it. They are not quite so down-at-heel as the colony that has been allowed to usurp the once glorious crest of the North Downs between Box Hill and Colley Hill, but there is no possible excuse for building on the Chiltern edge. There is no industry, no overcrowding.

It is just that parsimonious landowners have chosen to play havoc with a people's heritage that was handed down to them in trust.

Between Aston Rowant and Oxford there is a new flying field called Chilworth. Close by is a pleasant grange turned into a guest house and a modernized inn known as the 'Three Pigeons.' So far, good. But flying and road transport have brought their less desirable satellites.

Lorry-drivers and bus-travellers are pitchforked into the road here near the doors of a stucco bungalow with a raised tower that fulfils no function beyond giving the café its name. An equally unhappy eating place is less appropriately called 'Pigeon Pie.' A single row of bald bungalows makes the final blot on a once quiet country landscape.

The sight of Oxford and the Cotswold villages, especially Long Compton and Tredington, does something to restore the balance.

Here much ancient loveliness remains. Grey stone houses fit as naturally into the landscape of grey stone walls as the green trees merge into the green fields.

Even Stratford-upon-Avon surprisingly retains a certain comeliness.

When you get to Kenilworth ugliness begins again to rear its head. What blind authority allowed those brick atrocities to be built right up to the ancient castle walls?

Kenilworth Castle in a Northumbrian setting would be one of the wonders of the land. Hemmed in by the unsightly, unimaginative houses of Kenilworth town it is practically lost.

After leaving Kenilworth you feel almost at once the atmosphere of Birmingham, whose tentacles are now stretching all round the Midlands. You will find little trace of the Forest of Arden in Henley-in-Arden, while old Castle Bromwich looks down from its tree-covered knoll to what was once a green valley and now is partly the British Industries Fair, partly an aerodrome, and partly a new red-brick suburb.

In the valleys of South Wales it is fearful to think of what man has made of man, but what man has made of nature is scarcely less dreadful. At Brynmawr the Quakers gave the unemployed a lead by showing them how to turn the desert into a rose, and make a slag-heap into a pleasure garden, but along the road from South Wales to Oxford there are many places of horror. The outskirts of Gloucester are ugly and depressing, as indeed are the rims of most cathedral cities, and Cheltenham's fine example of chestnut avenues and beds of flowers is not followed.

Nor is the drive over the Cotswolds as beautiful as it used to be. It would be difficult to overpraise the harmony of Northleach and Burford where even the new buildings follow the great stone tradition, but ugly hoardings promising good fires and a hearty welcome to all passers-by day or

night only lessen the welcome that the farms on this high road would afford if left unadorned.

Most shameful of all is the series of army huts that still defile the high ground above Witney. Not only have they been allowed to remain and rot, breeding rats and other vermin, but they have attracted to them a seedling colony of shacks.

Nor do the new houses with their vivid scarlet rash of corrugated tiles do anything to restore the balance. Old Witney could hold its own in dignity with any other Cotswold town. To-day it is a disgrace and an eyesore.

In fact the whole approach to Oxford from this angle is unfortunate.

Eynsham Bridge is one of the most picturesque on the Thames. It is completely overshadowed by the ruins of the sugar-beet factory. The quiet dignity of the neat brick waterworks close by only serves to accentuate the foulness of the black derelict beet chimney. Worse follows.

All along the road to the foot of Cumnor Hill is a line of bungalows and huts, relieved at one point by a dump of wrecked cars. As an entrance to one of the world's fairest cities this Eynsham road has to be seen to be believed, though even here there is an example of what can and should be done.

Christ Church has replaced its slums on the way to Folly Bridge with more and more open spaces, revealing for the first time for centuries the splendour of its Great Hall, while the Oxford Preservation Society is fighting hard to rouse the citizens to a sense of their responsibility. But most of the evil has now been done.

On my way back from South Wales the bus took the Henley route to London, which gave me a chance to appreciate with considerable surprise the unspoilt woodlands on the north-west of Henley where only one house has been allowed so far to destroy the symmetry of trees.

But once on the London side of Maidenhead Thicket you are again inside the belt where no green lives.

I wonder what the aesthetic outlook of children born in



the new houses that border the Great West Road will be like? Here is neither town nor village, nothing but an aggregation of rows upon rows of houses that are presumably fitted with every labour-saving gadget, but lack any semblance of character. It is not until you get to Osterley that you realize that there are any divisions between district and district.

Osterley is good. The underground station is admirably simple and effective and is close to the London Passenger Transport Board sports ground and club house, the most cheering sights in the whole length of the road. The other pleasing sight is that of the new factories of Jantzen, Coty, Gillette, Packard, Firestone, Curry, Pyrene, Maclean, and other enterprising firms.

The contrast between these light, airy, simple modern factories and the old converted sheds at Slough is very striking.

The actual publicity value of a neat factory must surely be very great. Do not Sutton's and Carter's owe much to their window-dressing by the side of the railway at Reading and Merton?

But the plain man will perhaps best gauge what is happening to England if he travels the high roads of Sussex.

Let him take the coast road from Newhaven to Bognor Regis. Although he will be within a few yards of the sea most of the way he will only see it freely at Brighton, Worthing, and Littlehampton. A few years ago his view over the cliff or hedge would have been uninterrupted for nearly the whole journey, now it is blocked by a long succession of ugly and vulgar houses.

The poison begins at Peacehaven, which until thirteen or fourteen years ago was a piece of unspoilt downland open to the sea. It is now a colony of shacks, a long ungainly street of houses that all seem ashamed of themselves.

Slightly better houses stand in unregulated isolation on the slopes of Saltdean. At Ovingdean old buses, railway coaches, and bungalows are mercifully hidden along the hill-side a mile back from the sea.

Two roads link Brighton with Worthing. The sea-front

road is wholly industrial. At Portslade and Southwick, brick wharves, coal wharves, chemical works, electricity, gas- and dye-works all vie with one another in ugliness.

The back road (which runs parallel with the coast road) gave until lately an uninterrupted view of the downs rising gently to the north or, less frequently, of the sea below to the south. To-day you look in vain for either. The old Shoreham road borders sites for the bungalow builder. Red roofs block out the green downs and the green sea and are climbing on to the very downs themselves. We used to comfort ourselves with the belief that no house would ever be built above the three-hundred-foot contour mark. By what right then have the white house and the red barn been erected on the very sky-line of Truleigh?

So far as I can see there is nothing to prevent the landowner from cutting down Chanctonbury's beech-clump, and in its place erecting a sky-scraping roadhouse, for cars are to be seen by the score on the green smooth ridges in spite of notices everywhere forbidding any car to roam more than fifteen yards from a highway on to the downs.

## II

What is the plain man's remedy?

In the case of the cars it is to take the number of each one that he sees speeding over the downs, and report it.

In the case of ugly buildings erected on the sky-line no one man can do anything.

And public opinion is hard to rouse.

The vested interests who build and invest in building are much more powerful than those who merely wish to preserve beauty. To build brings in money, to preserve a green pleasance costs money. The downland landowners are enclosing more and more land with fences. Riding is becoming impossible and even walking reduced to a narrow straight track. It is an odd anomaly. People save up all their lives in order to retire to Sussex where they hope to be free to roam in

a green land, only to find, when they get there, that the land is no longer green and that they are merely changing a suburb near London for a less convenient suburb further away from it.

But the building goes on at a prodigious rate and the houses are occupied long before the paint is dry on the window-sills. Sites are seized for Tudor inns and Hollywood picture-houses and another piece of country disappears for ever. Think of the approach to Worthing from London. The whole green valley below Cissbury south of Findon is being filled in with red-brick houses. The hill-side of Salvington is lost and the ancient earthworks of Cissbury were only saved in the nick of time.

Wherever I go I hear people saying: 'What a pity!' as they hear of this and that estate being broken up for speculative building schemes. 'Speculative' seems the wrong word. It is betting on a certainty to build a house in almost any English field to-day. The craving to live in the country is almost universal. The love of the country is almost universal. The odd thing is that I meet so few of these converted countrymen in the country. They live in it only to escape from it. They spend their leisure in driving rapidly away from it, usually in the direction of London or the nearest large town. The inn and the cinema are their true loves. They are neither of the country nor in it. They pay lip-service to natural beauty and yet leave their litter strewn among the woods, completely unconscious of the evil that they have left as legacy. They uproot all the wild flowers and leave the woods as barren as a dunghill. They say they like natural beauty and yet if you meet them on a walk their conversation runs on anything but the scene that lies before them.

The truth is, I suppose, that man has to go through a vigorous training before he can see the country at all. He has to look closely enough to see why Cotswold stone suits the Cotswold country, why houses and churches are built of flint in the downland villages, why the Suffolk churches have such a wealth of timber roof, why the Berkshire cottages are of warm red brick.

Intensive study may and should intensify appreciation.

There has been far too much casual sloppy condescension to country delights, too much tendency to visit places not for their own sake but in order to tick them off on a list, to be in the category of those who have 'been there.'

Beauty spots in themselves are neither lovelier nor less lovely than other places. It is the visitors who have caused the spoliation of Land's End and the Lizard. It is visitors who have caused the erection of those unsightly booths that ring the Wye bank at Tintern.

It is difficult to be a beauty spot and live. Dovedale has achieved it, partly by warden's, partly by the cultivation of a local spirit which realizes how precious an asset beauty is and how easily lost.

Matlock, in its virginal state at least as lovely as Dovedale, has fallen and allowed hoardings to obliterate and quarries to cut into the sides of its once lovely hills. But Dovedale is inaccessible to motorists and Matlock lies on the high road from Derby to Manchester. Once again the visitor has killed the thing he loved.

Sir John Squire has said that if spoliation continues at the present rate there will soon be no England left to spoil. Edmund Blunden has suggested that this may be no great matter inasmuch as our children's taste in scenery may well be different from ours. They may execrate the very thing we are trying, partly on their behalf, to preserve, and to admire the very forms of architecture that we execrate.

If that is true it is to be hoped that their standards will be transitory. Taken generally you and I, plain men, admire very much what plain men admired in Chaucer's day, Shakespeare's day, and Wordsworth's day.

We have seldom mistaken beauty for ugliness in a woman's face if our poets and painters are to be believed, and we are as much at the mercy of the first awakening of spring as ever we were. Beauty is not absolute, but there are certain canons of beauty that are unalterable. More than any other race in the world are we influenced by the smooth gentle contours of the south-country wolds and downs. More than any other race

in the world are we braced up by the sight of the fells and jagged peaks of the north country which call upon us to spend ourselves in their conquest. The high hills will remain. I am less certain about the lower slopes. Hilaire Belloc said that the South Downs were safe from invasion for all time owing to their lack of water. They were inhabited once. They may very well be inhabited again. The houses are creeping higher. The water difficulty will be overcome.

But it is not a happy thought to visualize the running of trolley buses along the main street of a new downland town that will link the Devil's Dyke to Cissbury.

You shudder at the thought of that as you would shudder at the thought of Salisbury Cathedral being converted into a cinema. But I can assure you that in your own lifetime you have seen changes as dreadful and have become more completely reconciled to them than you have to the wrinkles on your brow or the greying of your hair.

You have watched village after village being torn asunder to permit of an arterial road running through it. It was only by a miracle and the intervention of the R.S.A. that the delightful hamlet of West Wycombe was not razed to the ground to make the Oxford road wider.

You remember perhaps the story of the stone fireplaces of Tattershall Castle that Lord Curzon rescued from being transported to America just when they were being taken aboard ship at Tilbury Dock.

You have seen the castle converted into a school and the manor house turned into a country club or guest house. You have seen the whole of a southern county turned into a standardized suburb.

You have been back to the village where you were born and been unable to recognize it owing to its 'development.'

You have seen wanton destruction proceeding without a murmur of dissent in the name of 'progress.'

You have heard of man's capacity to become accustomed to the monstrous. That has been accepted as a definition of sanity.

You have yourself borne with these horrors and raised no hand to stop them beyond paying your subscription to the C.P.R.E. and the National Trust. Well, now take stock of the position and see whether you are satisfied, and if not, what you propose to do to stop the rot.

We have not stopped unemployment and we have not stopped the spoliation of England, both matters of some urgency.

Here's a job big enough for even the most ambitious.

What is your plan?

One way is to begin in the local elementary school and try to teach every boy and girl to revere the local features that are worth reverence and to call upon them to preserve such points of beauty as are worth preservation.

What matters is that we should all feel strongly and be quite sure why we feel strongly.

We do not wish to be dragooned into hating a thing that does not really offend us at all.

Before the pylons crossed the downs I felt that no worse decoration than pylons was imaginable.

To-day on my walks I scarcely ever notice their existence and when I do it is not with loathing. They have surprisingly melted into the landscape so far as I am concerned.

Before I saw a skyscraper I regarded the thought of it with loathing as an epitome of grandiose vulgarity.

Now that I know skyscrapers I know that they are neither grandiose nor vulgar. They are simple, useful, and lovely, just as Battersea Power Station is simple, useful, and lovely. But they wouldn't suit the White Horse Hill above Uffington.

On the other hand as I stood on the hill at Harrow where Byron stood and looked down on the giant gasometer below I was filled with fury. My remonstrance drew a retort from the engineer who constructed it. To him it was a thing of beauty just as I suppose the portals of Euston or the façade of St. Pancras Station were symbols of beauty to their respective designers. I have tried to love the Harrow gasometer but without avail.

It isn't wise to hate a thing because it is modern. It isn't wise to love a thing because it is old. I prefer the new Merchant Taylors' School buildings to any part of Harrow. It is wise to love individuality and to suspect standardization. There was more individuality among the older generations.

But I would rather live in a modern labour-saving house adapted to my needs than in the gloomy barracks in which the prolific Victorians housed their twenty old masters and twelve young children.

When I see a medieval tithe barn in danger of falling to pieces, a Norman church about to be restored, or a Tudor manor house about to be demolished I certainly wish to be rich enough to step in and save it in the thorough way that the Office of Works save the ancient monuments that are lucky enough to be scheduled by them.

I could wish no finer memorial than that accorded to so many soldiers in the War.

To be associated with a tract of open moor or lowland in the sure and certain hope that it will for all time be preserved for the wanderer and from the despoiler is the finest immortality that any lover of England could desire.

We may not be capable of fineness in ourselves, but most of us have the means to bequeath some tract of land however minute which may well be the cause of fineness in others to come, for beauty undoubtedly breeds beauty just as ugliness breeds ugliness.

Nor need we wait till we are dead. The true patriot is not the man who cultivates his garden behind high walls, opening it only on state occasions in aid of the Queen's Nurses. He is the man who sees that flowers grow on the outer side of his walls or hedges, at least as richly as on the inner side.

The joy caused to the passers-by by such a simple gesture of goodwill as this is not to be computed in human measurements.

Conversely the man who for profit encrusts his shanty with lurid advertisements of bread, tea, cigarettes, and chocolates

causes unhappiness at least commensurate with the joy caused by the flower-grower.

The spread of ugliness is like the spread of weeds. It is easier to grow weeds than flowers. A hoarding and a sign-post to last twenty years can be put up in twenty minutes.

I said that one remedy lies in inoculating youth with a loathing for spoliation and a love of beauty.

I believe that to be the first step. An attack from a different angle is that of photography.

Side by side with the majesty of the rocks of Cheddar Gorge should be shown the dance hall that has been built at the entrance to one of the caves.

A dance hall in Blackpool is in keeping with the surroundings, but a dance hall in the Cheddar Gorge is no less fantastic and no less out of place than the re-erection of Cheddar Cliffs would be on Blackpool South Shore.

We should all of us make a point of taking photographs, not only of the places that most satisfy our eyes, but also of those places that most offend our eyes, so that we may build up a gallery of rogues, and if we fail to ridicule them into dressing themselves with better taste we may convince them that bad taste means bad business by warning all intending visitors off.

I believe that it would be quite easy to get certain resorts completely boycotted until they had put their house in order. We have up to now too readily allowed certain towns to be scapegoats without any reason at all.

I am far from suggesting that industry brings beauty to a town, but I do know that industry has rather enhanced than destroyed the strong individuality of Wigan, Bolton, Oldham, and Huddersfield, all of which are commonly held up to execration by the inhabitants of Swindon, Staines, Slough, and Gloucester, which are not only far uglier, but far less full of character.

I should like to have the comments of any ancient Roman soldier on modern Cannock, but Cannock is perhaps unavoidable. I cannot believe that Slough and Staines are unavoidable. They are the manifestation of that large section of



the English people, village councillors, rural district councillors, and town councillors who wouldn't care two hoots for amenities even if they knew what the word meant.

There is a much larger section than you would believe who regard all beauty as not only silly ('there's no money in it'), but as morally suspect ('just look at them poets').

These are the people who strongly support any scheme of the War Office to use lovely places as bombing grounds.

The *Evening News* had a leader entitled 'Utility and Beauty,' on the agitation against using the Farne Islands as a bombing area. It contained these words: 'The Farne Islands area now serves no purpose except for the seabirds, a handful of fishermen, and *those few reactionary folk who yet like to stand still and stare.*'

No one suggests that the *Evening News* is run as a philanthropic enterprise. It does not pretend to lead public opinion. It would not even dare to offend it. It follows it, or thinks it does. But does it?

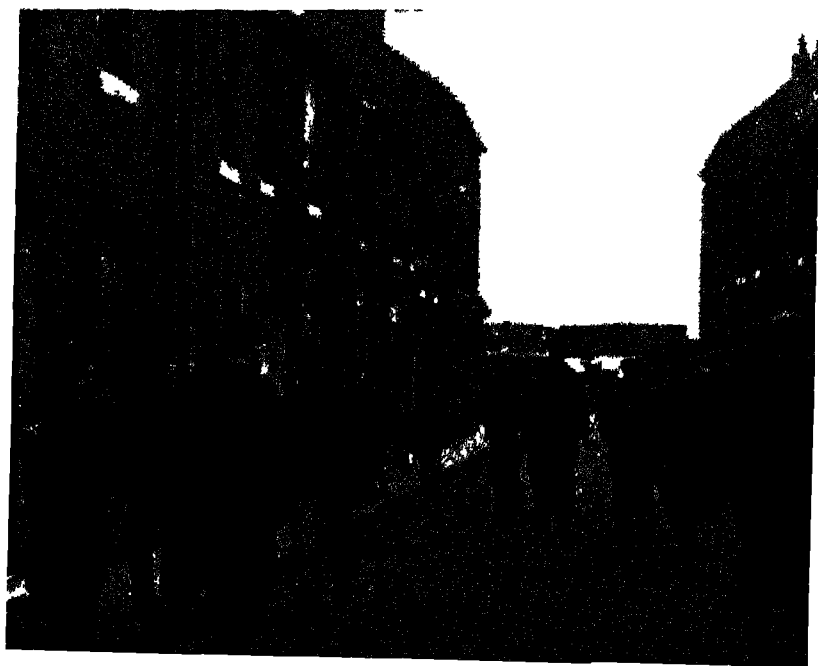
Certainly, C. E. Montague reminded us in another connection, there never was a time when public opinion was so vulgar or so ill-trained, or so powerful. In any case it behoves those of us who care intensely for the preservation of civilized values to fight more fiercely against any depredations and incursions made on our rightful heritage.

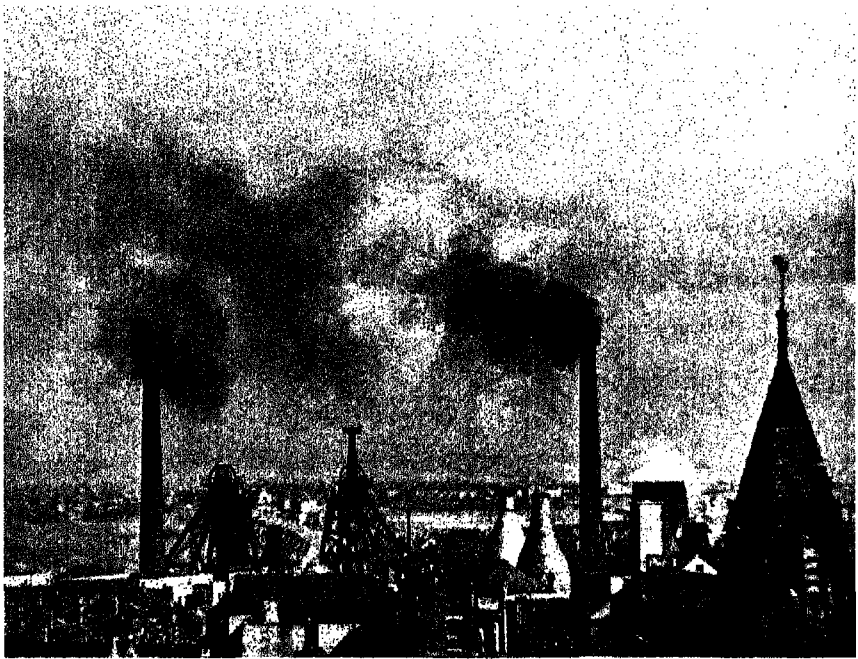
It is unwise in any battle to underrate the strength of the enemy. In this conflict it would be pretty hard to overrate it.

That does not make the battle less interesting. We cannot escape mutilation, but we may emerge still breathing, and with a handful of English earth still left untainted in our hands.



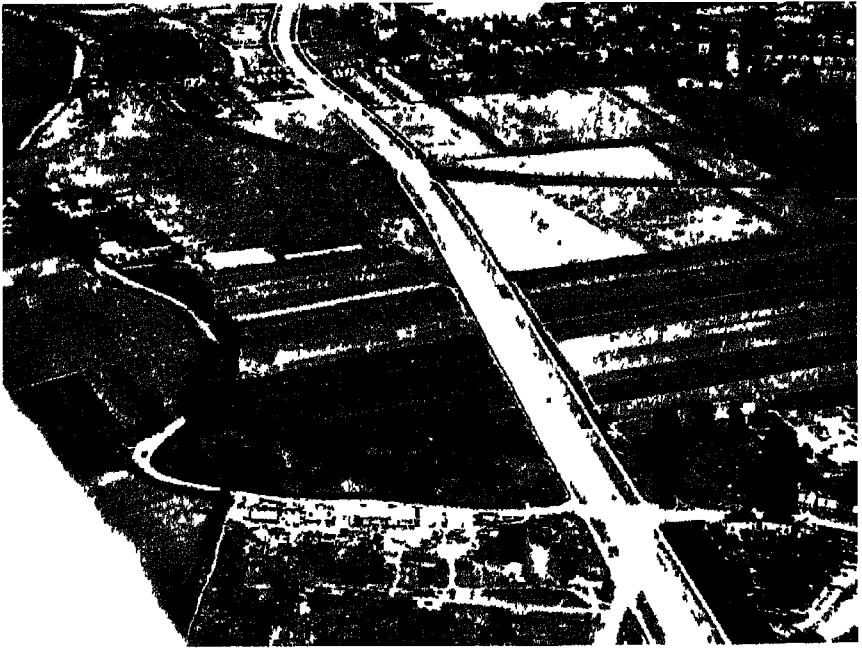
*Durham is as Durham does.*





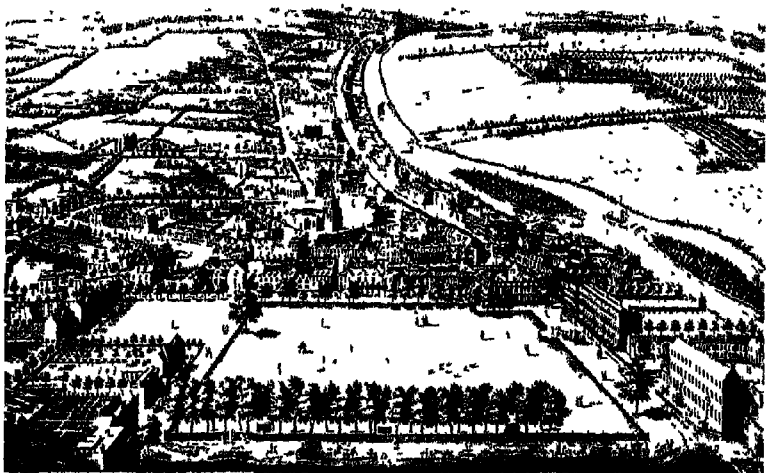
*Workplaces and homes. The more smoke the more washing.*





*Our new Great West Road and what has become of it. The same section before and after strangulation by ribbon building.*





I. (Above) Richmond, a little town near London; a view of it round about 1730. It possessed a Royal Palace, a hill with a view, a spacious air, and a Royal Park in the background, guaranteeing a permanent open space.

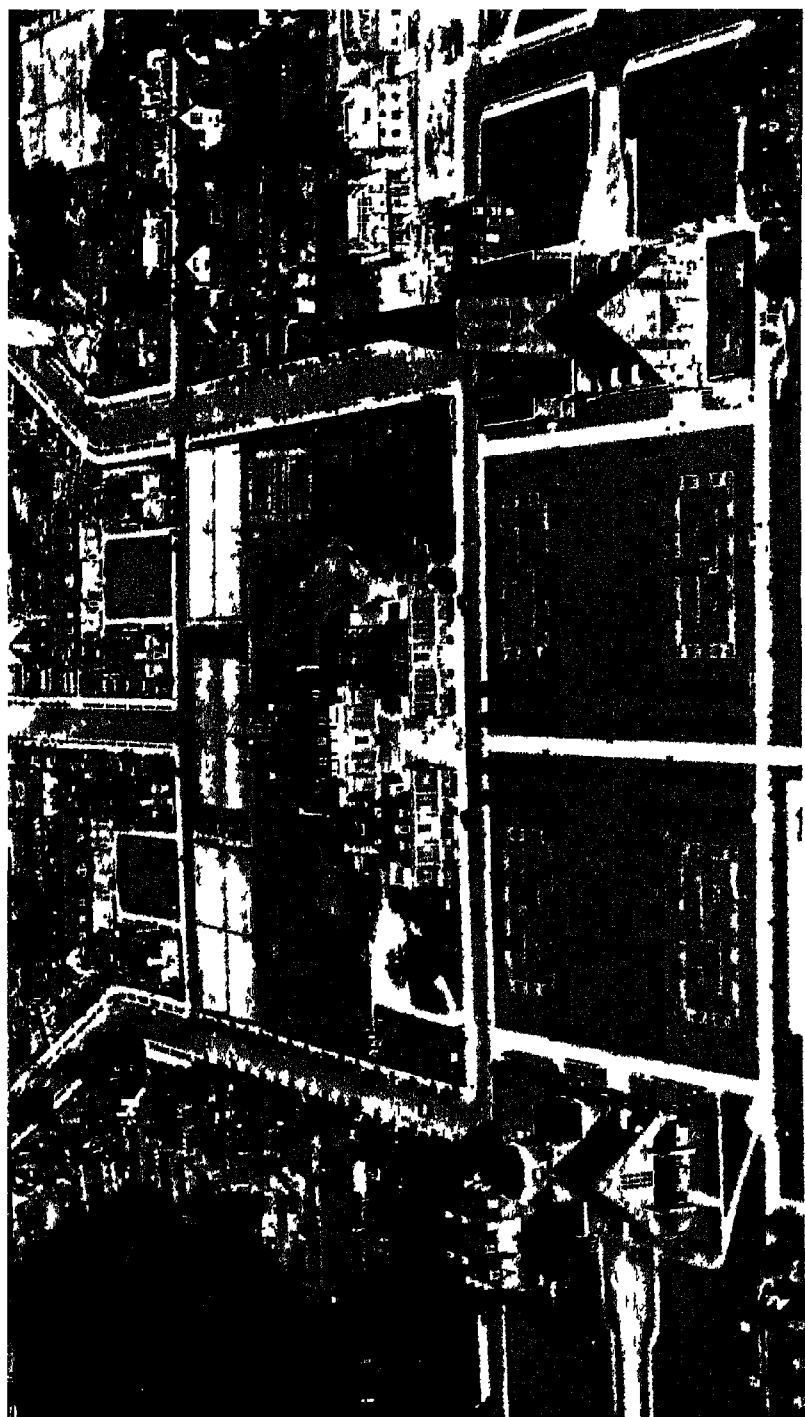
II. (Below) Richmond in 1824. Houses are beginning to creep along the roads that join it to Mortlake and East Sheen, and the town is expanding. But who could foresee, in those uncrowded days, that London would suddenly come near and hurl hundreds of thousands of tons of traffic weekly through the tight knot of Richmond streets?





*Communal neighbourliness or semi-detached individualism?  
A fundamental town-planning issue still keenly debated.*





*A high-light of English town-planning. The civic-centre, Hampstead Garden Suburb.*



*Glencoe—the old road and the new.*









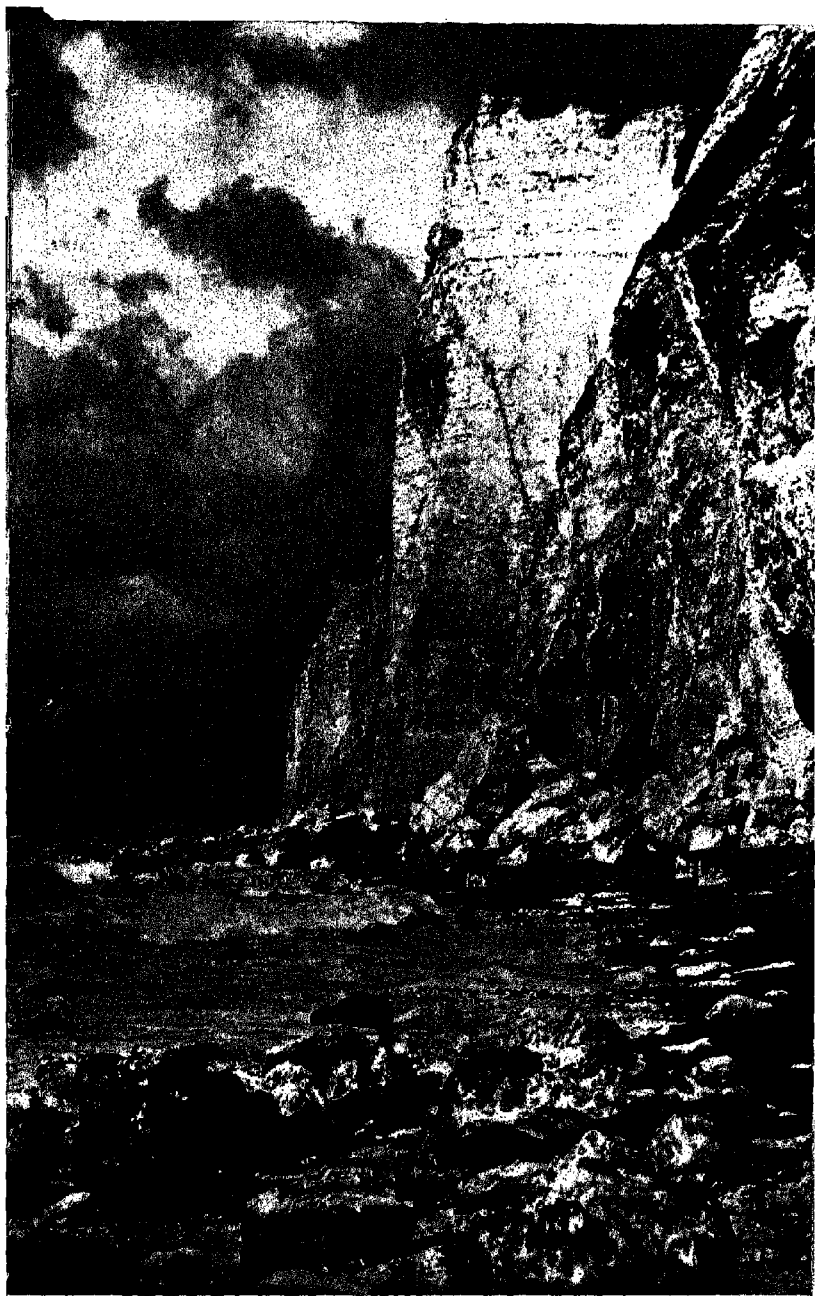
*In the Cotswolds—house and barn are equally gracious.*



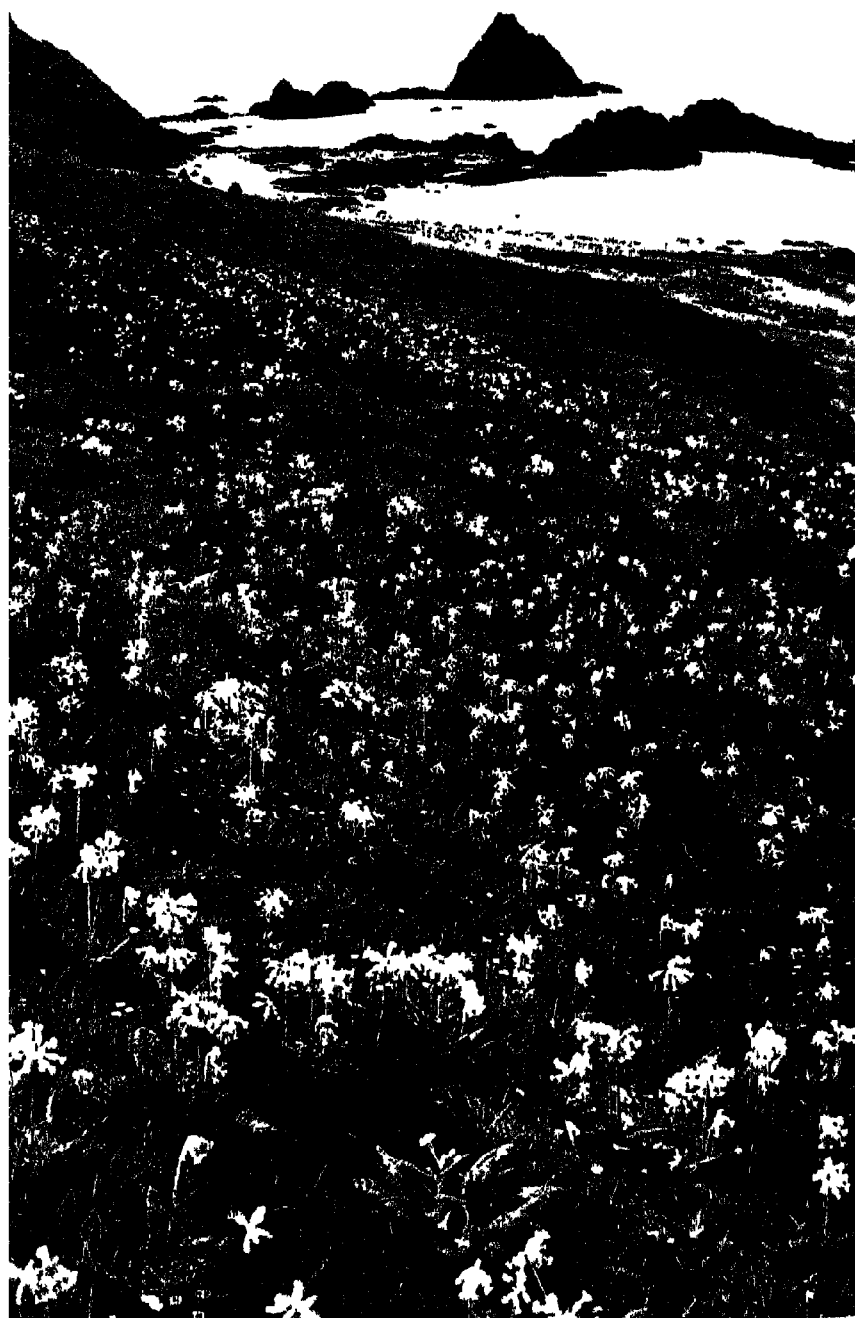


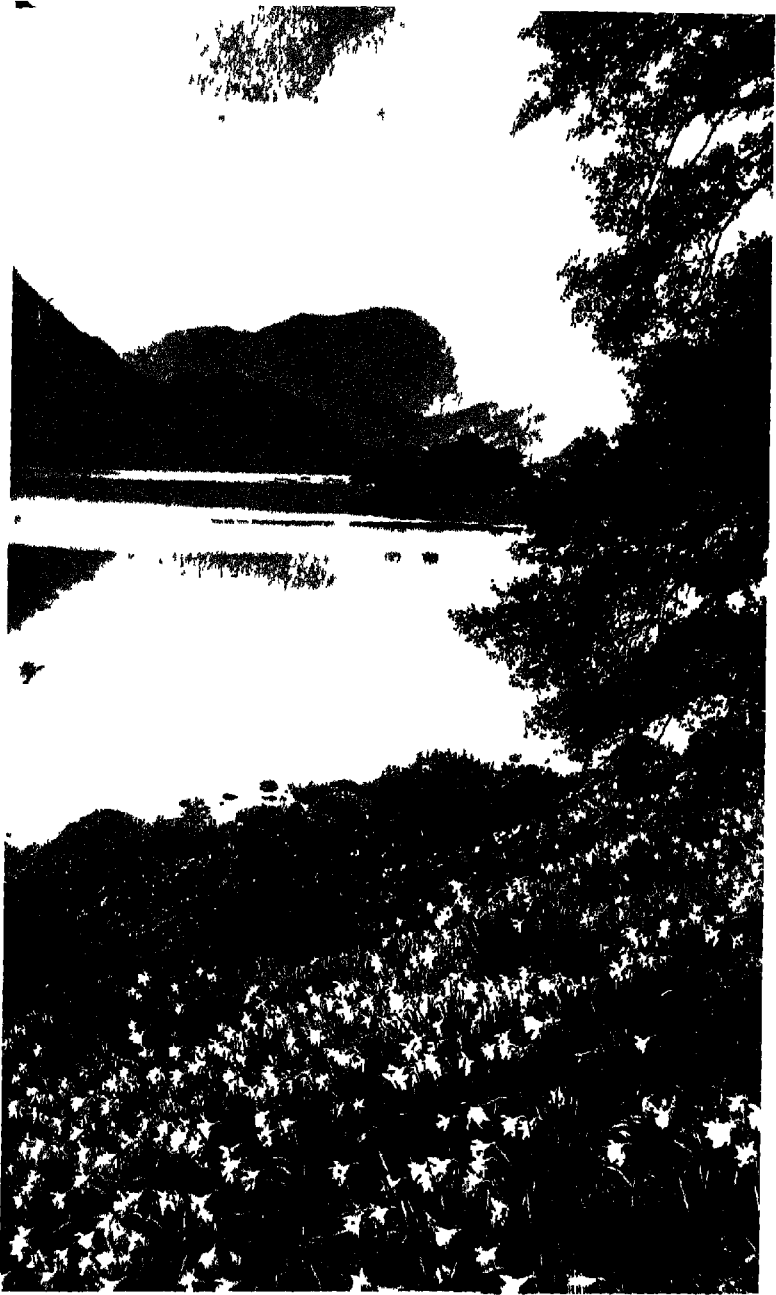
*(Above) Kersey Village, Suffolk, and (below) Boughton Monchelsea, Kent.*





*The chalk cliffs of Sussex.*





*Wordsworth's daffodils. Ullswater.*



*The Moelwyns Merioneth—a winter tanestry*



# *The Sea Coast*

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R. M. LOCKLEY

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## *The Seaside Village*

A CREAKING west wind has come to rustle the dry leaves and say that summer is done. All those beautiful months have slipped by so swiftly, May with her flowers and dry northerly airs, June with her still seas and cloudless noons, and July that engraved the summer colours indelibly again upon the wondering mind, but yet whose deep blue seas turned restlessly at times as though aware that the end was in sight.

The sea-fishermen and all those who use the sea in small boats know well enough that there's 'never no weather' after the end of July. A strong superstition has arisen among us that the appearance, if not the mere anticipation of, visitors and the 'pleasuring' season must inevitably mean bad or broken weather. It seems that God once gave the fishermen the whole of the summer from April to October to work in good weather at their age-old task of winning bread upon the water with net and line. Hard work all through, but honest to the last thread, and a man then was granted fair skies and quiet seas.

The summer visitors have spoilt all that. 'Pleasuring,' by which is meant the carrying of passengers on sightseeing cruises, fishing expeditions, and for reward generally, has meant easy money for the fishermen. And to honest folk easy money cannot be entirely good money—it is tainted—never so pure and uprightly earned as that got by the sweat of the brow. And the taint displeaseth God. So God has frowned and dealt with the matter accordingly. The fishermen see the outward sign of His displeasure in the troubled heaving of the sea.

I know that creaking wind so well, and catching its rustle among the dry leaves in my garden, I hear again the rich echo of the fulfilment of all the summers past. Ripe fruit is dropping from branch and bush, and the blackbird busy garnering gives a throaty chuckle, as uneasy as a thief. But the white-throats and willow-warblers, like unashamed children, pull down the hanging juicy currants. Yes, the wind says, summer is done, fruit set, birds fledged, the sun is sliding to the other side of the world, and now I've come to shrivel the leaves and shake them off for their winter sleep. Already birds are flying south.

I look at the calendar. The last day of July.

I look out of the window and up the lane. Yes, there's that annual phenomenon, the August visitor at Mrs. Brown's, the Gables, as glaringly evident and regular as the rate demand.

I look out into the harbour. The wind is stirring white sails in the sea-roads. Yachts and 'pleasuring' boats are riding at anchor, their mainsails hung out to dry after a night of fitful rain and mist.

How extraordinarily stupid, I think, are we English people to select the worst of the four summer months in which to take our annual fortnight or month's holiday! In Iceland, where the children have the whole of the summer from mid-May to October 1st to play in the scarce sunshine, I was asked for an explanation of this; the Icelanders were inclined to believe that we kept our children at school because the midsummer sun so far south was too hot for them!

Stupid of us, no doubt, and yet we country dwellers are secretly if selfishly pleased. We pray that it may continue to be so. We do not want the rabble (among us, I fear, a common designation of the August visitors) overrunning field and wood and shore in the beautiful months of May, June, and July. The millennium has not yet arrived that we can trust them to behave sanely and humanely to those precious possessions of ours, flowers, birds, and wild creatures. And we need our measure of peace—a proportionately deeper, richer peace than the townsmen look for—as much as they do.

After all, too, this late summer wind that sighs to us of the end of the fair weather, tells a very different story to the eager crowd pouring out of train, bus, and car and filling to overcrowding every house, hut, and room along the coast. To them it is a new and magic wind, redolent of high summer (according to a town-dwelling friend whom I asked, 'high summer' meant the height of the August holidays), a pure and beautiful wind that will purge them of all their town sicknesses. And so of course it is, and will. But secretly we smile.

There is a shuffle in the road below my window, a familiar shuffle telling of the walker's love and respect for mother earth, a countryman's walk in fact. Looking up, I see that the village factotum, Tommy Touch, has gone to the sea-wall and is looking out at the anchored boats. Tommy and I have a gardening job to do, and he has arrived to keep the undated appointment. He has leisure to talk an hour or so at the sea-wall if I am not ready, and he may go away and do the job himself if I do not join him. Or he may not. You would think that Tommy does nothing all day in this way, but you 'd be wrong. It's his countryman's way of living, taking his time, interspacing leisure with work as he may, but his tongue or his hands may never be idle, and in the end he accomplishes all and more than you might have thought possible. Easygoing, as the saying is, and from the light in Tommy's eyes you 'd say that those who live busy but unflurried lives are the happiest among us.

Tommy would never dream of tapping at my door. He knows I will join him if I am ready. I go out with him up the lane to the vegetable garden.

As we walk we encounter the apparition. . . .

He is coming down the lane as if he were walking down the middle of Bond Street, as immaculate as a clean white towel (and looking just about as blank), too maddeningly debonair and self-possessed for words. His light blue jacket and plus-fours are the acme of tailored perfection, and his groomed hair, his tie, his shirt, his stockings, his shoes all match with an arrogant pattern. He is so perfect that I long to shake him,

to thump him vigorously, to do anything to break the sharp note of incongruity which vibrates from him and fairly hums over the pale green of the gorse banks.

For we, of course, are muddling along in our patched old corduroys, myself in breeches as dun-coloured (with dirt) as the soil itself, and Tommy in long trousers worn paler still in knee-homage to mother earth.

As the apparition comes abreast of us I watch Touch narrowly, for native wit drips like pearls from beneath his unkept moustache. I see the beginnings of a greeting twitch around his humorous mouth, for in the country we greet all save those we have undying feuds with at the moment. Then the look momentarily froze, then vanished altogether. The tailor's dummy had stared *through* us. Touch said a second later, and without rancour, as if he were naming a peculiar species of animal:

'A visitor, him!'

It is beyond my powers to describe to you the deftness, the perfect natural wit with which Touch uttered the words, encompassing them with a deep but quite unconscious sarcasm. And my feelings were pacified instantly.

Visitors! There ought to be a customs office at the gate of every village where visitors and tourists would be subjected to a rigid clothes parade. I would have every parish council enforce by-laws preventing strangers from entering its bounds in unsuitable clothes, in ultra-fashionable suits and frocks that offend the eyes of the natives. I would bar the modern, meaningless, sack-like plus-fours, the tight skirt, the feather decorated hat, and high-heeled shoes. Nor would the paste and rouge of obvious make-up pass easily through our village barrier. We should establish there a de-rouging, de-carbonizing plant. The saucy, nose-in-air mademoiselles of the city should not be allowed to give our unpainted native lasses an unjustifiable inferiority complex by making them feel dowdy and irredeemably out-of-the-world. London and Brighton should not come to our little sea-hamlet unless suitably, demurely arrayed. The shawls and aprons of our women and

the seafaring clothes of our men have the grace of usefulness, a practical beauty, but this traditional fashion is daily threatened by the penetration of cheap, trashy modern clothes.

'Visitors!' Tommy Touch's unconscious scorn was not without a hint of pathos. Or it may have been my fancy that there lurked in his voice something of a sigh for the good old times which visitors by their coming have so completely changed. There was a time when the seaside village was a self-contained unit deeply immersed in its centuries-old trades of fishing and farming, and in a world of local customs and courtesies associated therewith. Visitors were rare and fleeting phenomena, who treated the villagers as objects of ethnological or anthropological interest, and in their turn were looked upon and spoken of as 'foreigners' by the villagers.

All is changed to-day in the English (and in most of the Welsh and Scottish) sea-villages. As the politicians say, the 'danger of proletarianism is near.' Cheap and easy transport and increased leisure have brought the seaside within a few hours' reach of the townsman in search of recreation. The interests of commerce (to use another parliamentary phrase) having been served by the erection of monstrous and unhealthy accumulations of brick, mortar, and cement in the form of industrial towns, the jaded inhabitants are compelled to seek fresh air and sunshine by the sea.

The early stages in the evolution of the seaside resort can still be studied in the remoter districts. It is 'discovered' by the adventurous few in search of a perfectly quiet holiday on their own. By an extraordinary piece of good luck it is found to be 'utterly unspoilt,' asleep in the peace of its ancient peasantry and squirearchy. Its existence must be named only to a favoured few. Among the favoured few or their friends are men who find themselves in a position to buy, lease, or rent land in the village for the purpose of building themselves houses for the holidays and/or retirement. Or they may convert existing cottages. Indeed, there have been some glaring occasions when to seek this end the townsman has bribed the landlord to evict a poor native who could do

no more than pay a nominal rent. As a result land values, and with them rents, immediately start to rise.

The evisceration of the rural community has now begun. The daring adventurers who discovered the village in the first place now refer to it as 'our village.' All their friends must see 'our village,' agree as to its perfection and unspoilt charm, and share among them tales of the amazingly quaint and simple rusticity of the species of *homo sapiens* native to it. Odd characters, like my Tommy Touch, come in for special fame, and every one must see him as part of the wonders of 'our village.'

The friends of those who have already staked a claim to our seaside village accommodation, their friends and their friends' friends, now swoop down in ever-increasing numbers upon us in the form of both 'day' and 'stay' visitors. They are quite unable to fend for themselves and rely entirely on the resources of the village to feed and shelter them. But they have plenty of money wherewith to buy whatever service the village can give them. And it looks easy to the villagers to provide that service and obtain that money. Much more so in fact than to struggle on with the pursuit of native industries, and in particular with the highly speculative and seldom remunerative occupation of sea-fishing. Besides, they need the extra money to pay higher rents and live more expensively. The fishermen find it less arduous and more paying to fit out their boats for 'pleasuring,' while their wives make use of every available room at home to house the visitors. Fishing rapidly becomes a side-line for the amusement of visitors, and though in some remote parts it may be pursued seriously for a living in winter and early spring, just as often that period is devoted to the preparation for summer visitors, the rooms and the boats being painted and decorated from the funds accumulated in the course of 'pleasuring' the previous summer.

Meanwhile the new houses of the rich 'foreigners' are, with the squire's permission (in few cases can he afford to resist the devil), taking up positions, for which they have paid extravagantly, commanding the finest views. The village

becomes hemmed in with architectural incongruities, since it is notable that no Englishman will intentionally build a house that has anything else in common—and I am judging from examples in front of me as I write—with his neighbours' abodes. He always builds 'a house that is different, you know!'

The original village had some considerable pretensions to a natural charm and beauty that comes of mellow age and building with native material. Yet though the small cottages have long claimed a place in the landscape and our affections we cannot deceive ourselves that they are not, by modern standards, hygienically unsound. And the advent of the new houses has brought the sanitary and health officers on the scene. Follows the inevitable invidious comparison of the old with the new conditions of sanitation, water supply, light, and heat. The old is condemned, eventually demolished, or allowed to moulder away untenanted. And the ancient seaside village is extinct as such.

Now observe the behaviour of the early settlers who claim the status of old residents, I mean the men who, discovering Seadean ten or twenty years ago, have since lived in the grand houses commanding the views. These are the people who now say: 'When I built my house here Seadean was the most charming and least known spot on God's earth. Now the old village has been destroyed, building is rampant, and the place is utterly spoilt!'

Ten to one it is these people who will be the first to yield their houses to the prospective hotel-builder at prices which soar far beyond the sums they themselves paid to the squire in the first place. Their houses will become places of accommodation for the many people in search of a pleasantly remote but not 'too, too aboriginal' holiday home. And with bags of gold under their arms the Judases will steal away.

'I gave up Seadean because it became too popular,' they will say, 'but I've found an utterly unspoilt place not far away at Smugglers' Cove, where I've bought a waste piece of ground with a magnificent view.'

Smugglers' Cove may be merely a name on the map at

present, as was Seadean, but in a little while it will have followed Seadean along the path to that high and mysterious pinnacle of fame encompassed in the title (beloved of publicity men): 'Queen of Watering Places.'

So runs the inevitable, damnable evolution of the whole sparkling chain of British sea-villages, from humble homes in which in olden times men started up from net and line to man the wooden world-conquering ships of England. To-day the sturdy race of fishermen is seriously diminished and springing up in their place we have this servile, touch-cap, unintrepid body of longshoremen. 'What about the lifeboat service,' you ask. As the lifeboat-men freely admit, and it is no belittlement to say, there is no hardship in this to-day. There is even great competition to be one of the crew, for in this service a man is well paid to go to sea in modern, powerfully motored unsinkable craft. . . .

A dark picture, only relieved by the fact that some men still live heroic lives at deep-sea fishing, trawling, lining, and drifting, going down to the sea chiefly from the ancient fishing ports: Hull, Grimsby, Yarmouth, Brixham. . . .

And the remedy? Nothing but a dictatorship will save the English coast in our time. There are a few voices, but they cry from the wilderness of man's heedlessness. When the millennium arrives, when battleships are turned into floating world-cruising universities, perhaps their guns, as a last act before being spiked, will be allowed to blow to dust the hideous, continuous, and disfiguring chain of hotels, houses, and huts which by then will have completely encircled these islands.

Am I unduly pessimistic? Listen to this, which I have just read in the local paper. A meeting has been convened to make suggestions for the conversion of a beautiful, wild, and lonely sweep of sandy coast (well-known and of sacred memory to me) 'into a second Blackpool, where the people of the industrial districts can take their fortnight's holiday. Vigilance to secure publicity by every possible means, including extensive press advertisement, must be the watchword of the development committee.'



It is only possible for me to do two things to try to stem the development committee's activities. One, write a letter to the papers (in the interests of newspaper advertising it may be suppressed); and two, stir up the Council for the Preservation of Rural Wales, which has influence but no money to campaign with. There is to-day so little untrammelled sea-coast left in England and Wales that it seems suicidal to continue to destroy a yard more of the remnant of wild loveliness which we have inherited. Already the loneliest and wildest sweeps of sandy coast have been seized for the purpose of air bombing stations.

The development committee will doubtless corner me by asking me what alternative I have to offer them which will absorb local unemployment so well, etc. . . . It will be useless for me to point to the wild beauty of the golden sand and the billowing marram-grass, the soaring buzzards and the strutting red-billed crows upon the strand, and the happy beachcombers, dressed in their ragged clothes, ranging the low-water reefs for jetsam and laver-weed, their feet loving to be ever where the tide flows. The eyes of the development committee would see naught but a vision of bustling hotels facing a concrete promenade (how cheap and easy concrete will be with all that golden sand!) above an overcrowded beach. It will be useless for me to point out that we already have all the Blackpools it is possible to run successfully, and the rest of the coast must be saved for those who desire the opposite—peace and free communion with a clean landscape. It will be useless for me to point out that we have no right to destroy the rural population by taking up their land and employing them for our own money-getting purposes, merging their identity in the heterogeneous parasitic horde that will arrive to cater for the jaded folk from the industrial districts.

'The best citizens spring from the cultivators.' But the good qualities of simplicity, neighbourliness, and generosity which grow out of contact with the earth will be cankered and stifled in the race to make the most out of the fleeting summer visitors to the new Blackpool. These natives, who once knew

a quiet independence and freedom to work at their special crafts, and on their plots of land, will lose everything worth while, including their own peace, in the unworthy scramble for money with which to live empty lives in imitation of the herd about them.

Getting and spending we lay waste our powers,  
Little we see in nature that is ours.

### *Flora and Fauna*

Though we have—thank heaven!—in many districts county by-laws designed to check the uprooting of plants and the rifling of birds' nests, yet experience has taught how impossible it is for us to watch every visitor; and the looting of the most fragile and lovely of all country amenities still goes on in the most wholesale fashion. Only the other day I challenged a young couple who had cut out and were carrying off in their car a solid carpet of sea-pinks about two feet square which had stood, a vivid glowing flame, upon the headland near my home.

'But there's plenty left!' they protested. 'At least fifty times as much!'

'And if,' I said aloud, 'of the hundred and fifty people who will walk on the headland during the rest of the month while the thrift flowers, one third do and say the same as you, where shall we stand for a single sea-pink next year?'

'We shall propagate them in our garden . . .' they began to say.

'For yourselves only to enjoy!' I went on. 'Surely you can see how selfish your action is? We cannot come to your garden, wherever it is, and see it flowering. It's doubtful if even you will enjoy them, for sea-pinks must have salt winds, and animals to graze them to grow into carpets like that.'

So much for my attempt at polite persuasion. I might as well have shouted my real feelings, which were bitterly abusive. As it turned out, only the quietly uttered threat of

calling in the police made them, with ill grace, replace the mat of thrift (which as a matter of fact, for lack of heavy rain, never survived the uprooting, though I carried water to it thrice afterwards).

It is difficult to follow the mental processes of such collectors, whose selfishness is depriving us and future generations of the opportunity of seeing what they have seen and confessedly gloried in. Uprooting wild flowers is one of the gravest minor sins against society, and he who does so is worse than the common thief who steals but private property. At present the penalties for this crime are quite nominal, the fine so small as to be worth risking by the greedy collector, whose chances of being caught red-handed are so slight. There is only one good sign—the increasing weight of public opinion against the flower-root thief, evident in the formation of protective societies, letters to the press, and the publicity given by the press to prosecutions. Yet still we read, in books and articles, of the search carried out (and recorded with pride) for rare and vanishing plants by collectors. Alpines notably suffer—not a few of us have read with surprise the account of how a well-known cabinet minister succeeded, after many attempts, in furnishing his English rock garden with many exceedingly scarce mountain flowers from the Alps, collected personally.

So, too, egg-collecting, and to a lesser extent bird-skin collecting, have and are doing the same harm in this sphere. If egg-collecting to-day has, owing to a more enlightened public, fewer adherents, these are probably collectively just as dangerous as when there were more of them. For it is now fashionable to collect, not one egg out of each nest, but the whole clutch! One well-known collector, who, through prosecution, has achieved an unenviable notoriety, defends this taking of the whole clutch by assuring us that the bird will always lay another clutch! Whereas if you take only one or two eggs, the bird will, he says, continue to brood the remainder, and so rear fewer young ones in the end than if she had had to lay a fresh clutch. He even claims that the bird, by laying later in the summer, has better weather in

which to rear an even larger family than the first! But God, not this gentleman, appointed the birds' nesting season, and the fact is that a great many birds will not produce another egg after the last of the season's clutch is laid and certain physiological changes have taken place in the body of the brooding bird. Other species need to lay two clutches and rear two broods in the year in order to keep up their numbers, but this collector would deprive them of fifty per cent of their survival chances. While the whole pitiful excuse falls to the ground when we ask what is to stop the next collector from finding the second clutch (if one is laid) and, unaware of the first clutch, taking it complete?

No, far better the schoolboy's simple and time-honoured rule of taking one egg from each nest carrying a full clutch. The urchin, at the same time as he satisfies his strong craving to possess the beautiful objects, is showing a humanity and restraint that augur well for a future protective interest in the welfare of English wild life. I suppose we all began our study of birds in this way, by searching for those wonderfully coloured fragile mementoes of the fascinating, mysterious, puzzling, wild birds which called to us so alluringly in early days. Some of us were undoubtedly more avaricious than others, but with our gradual accumulation of bird-lore came an increasing interest in the living bird which made us realize the futility of our collections of faded, empty shells. And we collected no more.

Collectors are but one of the many problems facing those interested in the conservation of English wild life. One of the gravest is the gradual penetration by building and other interests of the many areas up and down the coast which are by their nature strongholds and sanctuaries for the rarer birds and beasts. It is not my intention to belittle the good work of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and its sister body in Wales. These unofficial guardians, working without capital to buy land, are stirring up public opinion in the right direction. But they cannot keep pace with the widespread encroachment which goes on so insidiously while they

are chiefly occupied with saving areas already partly spoilt, and the same applies to the work of the National Trust.

It is here that we might expect the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to do more than it does at present. With the tremendous interest now evinced by the general public in the outdoors and especially in birds, there is a splendid opportunity for an energetic and permanent campaign to be set on foot with the object of scheduling practically all the unspoilt heaths, downs, islands, dunes, and waste places in England and Wales as sanctuaries for wild life in perpetuity; and of opening a national fund from which moneys can be paid for the purchase and for the renting of the same whenever the threat of building necessitates this. We have the fine example in America of the National Association of Audubon Societies, which yearly adds to its long list of nature reserves, and gathers funds by its whole-hearted publicity campaign. Unfortunately our Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has an almost archaic outlook on present-day conservation problems, and as a result has lost touch with the modern trend of bird-lore. Its formal inelastic policy has led to drift, complacent retrenchment, the loss of support, and a reduced income, where it should be rapidly expanding.

It would not be fair to charge this society with the virtual disappearance of such rare species as osprey, sea-eagle, and kite as breeding birds, yet had more enterprising methods been taken, we might at least have had one of these birds breeding freely with us to-day. The kite, for instance, once bred in plenty in London. Its disappearance therefrom is probably not unconnected with the necessary closing of open drains and the proper collection of refuse. But there is less excuse for its disappearance from the country, where its natural food is plentiful. Yet it has been allowed to dwindle down to one or two pairs. Many pounds have been spent on the provision of day and night watchers to keep away—not always successfully—human egg-thieves from these nesting kites, which, because of their approaching extinction, are particularly tempting to the rabid collector. Yet no attempt has been

made to control the worst thief of all—the egg-loving carrion-crow. This natural burglar has been responsible for just as much damage among the kites' eggs as the unnatural human egg-collector. Nor is there much hope now that this pitiful remnant of kites hiding in the Welsh hills will survive long under the present method of preservation. I understand that an introduction of new blood was advocated long ago, but the society turned a deaf ear to the idea.

A transfusion of this kind seems to be the sole hope of saving the kites. It is now a recognized method on the Continent, where, for instance, the German Government, desiring to re-establish the magnificent horned owl in German forests, runs a 'farm' for the rearing and releasing of young horned owls taken as nestlings from the wilds of East Prussia. With the co-operation of European countries where kites are still common, it should not be difficult to import young kites and hand-rear them until they are able to take their place in the wild. Speaking from an experience of rearing ravens and buzzards from the nest and gradually allowing them to feed and fend for themselves, I find the method is quite successful. At the same time kites' eggs from the Continent could be placed in the nests of buzzards in Wales, and later in Scotland and Devon. The buzzard is in such a strong position numerically in Wales that its eggs could be sacrificed without risk to its status in order to rear fresh kite blood from kites' eggs so placed.

At the time of writing a similar experiment with storks (the heron being foster-parent) is being carried out in south England by two or three enterprising individuals.

Once the kite has regained some measure of prosperity it should be able to withstand egg-collectors, who would lose much of their former interest in kites' eggs (because they would no longer be able to label kites' eggs as coming from pure British stock, the value of the eggs to the collector would be diminished), more especially through the increased weight of public support which would undoubtedly be accorded any such successful attempt at a restoration.

By their actions collectors have proved that they are virtually dictators of life and death to scarce species. It is monstrous, yet it is true. The late W. H. Hudson was the first tenacious advocate of the only law that can save wild life from the rabid collector—a law to forbid shooting and collecting by private persons. This is still the only means by which wild life in Britain can be assured of safety. A general law should be passed, with reservations as to game and certain abundant species that may be harmful to land and sea harvests, while permits could be issued by the Home Office to public bodies (museums and societies) desiring to collect for public-spirited reasons.

Will the red-billed chough then return to Dover cliffs, on which travellers and poets of old recorded it? I hear that there is now only one pair left in Devon and Cornwall, while they yearly grow scarcer in Wales. But under conservation and Hudson's law there should be every chance that some at least of all those birds which have been (and still are) denied their ancient homes in England and Wales by the greed of the collector (aided and abetted, in the case of rapacious birds, by the indiscriminating gamekeeper) will return to breed with us. We should hope to see then those beautiful birds—so rare with us now—whose names are as tongue-rolling and fascinating as their glorious plumages—the golden oriole, the hoopoe, the honey buzzard, the three harriers, the spoonbill, the bittern, the white stork, and the black-tailed godwit, to quote but a few of the names of our rare and vanishing birds.

# *The Lakes*

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KENNETH SPENCE

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THAT the Lake District should be given a chapter of this book to itself should suggest that there are in this unique area of England some very special problems in rural preservation. Indeed, historically, the district may be considered the birthplace of such problems inasmuch as it inspired Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes* which should still be a bible to all who care for the aesthetics of the countryside.

From the time of Wordsworth and the Lake Poets down to to-day, the district has attracted to it people who loved and understood these hills and dales. Ruskin, Canon Rawnsley, Ewart James, Gordon, Wordsworth, and others, have all fought valiantly, and perhaps more successfully than any other men in other popular parts of England, for the preservation of the beautiful. It is not surprising, therefore, that many who come to the Lake District for the first time, knowing other 'holiday areas,' are amazed to find how little serious and permanent damage has been done. Despite a good sprinkling of gauche Victorian buildings and inconsiderate and over-affluent 'landscape gardening,' most of the high fells have remained completely untouched and many valleys have come out of the ordeal, if not scathless, at least with only very minor scars.

Like most stone districts, it has been until recently cheaper not only to build walls of local material, but to cover roofs with that beautiful green slate that has now made its way—rightly or wrongly—to all parts of England. To help matters, the district holds a fine tradition in rural architecture. The big and ornate would seem to have found no friends amongst the



older builders, so that the farms and small hamlets are becomingly lowly and in no way try to compete with the fells amongst which they stand. Whitewash and the dark dry stone walling mingle graciously, and red brick has been looked on askance by all and sundry with a unanimity that is creditable and delightful.

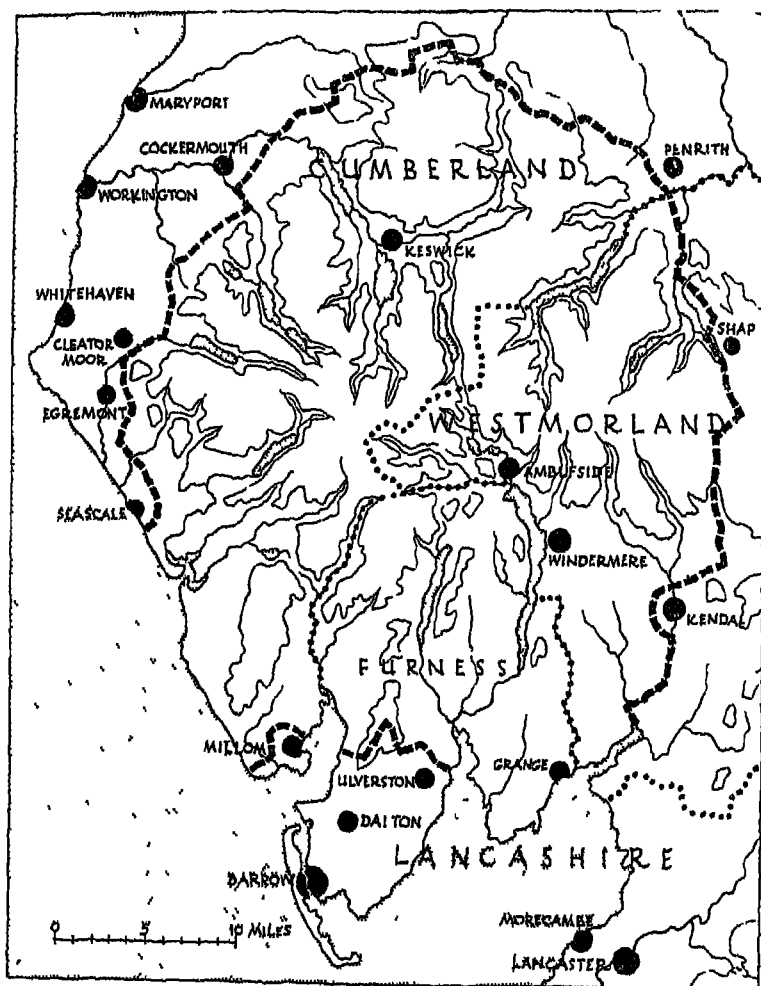
But the efforts of the enthusiasts of the past would, I fear, have been of little avail had such towns as Manchester and Liverpool been twenty miles instead of eighty miles away. That Cumbria has been, until almost to-day, too far for the ordinary business man either to live in or even to reach for weekends has been perhaps its greatest safeguard.

The cheap motor, the improved main roads, and the growth of a larger and more leisured middle class has thrown us open to the dangers that have long beset the fringes of the Peak District and the whole of the Home Counties. Fortunately, however, our champions were fore-armed and have done what they could to encourage the local authorities to use what powers they can through by-laws and planning schemes to minimize the new danger—though these powers are inadequate and will become even more so.

It is unfortunate that the suggestion has been made that the interests of the tourist and the resident in an area like the Lake District are conflicting. This, I fear, is the cry of the rare landowner or resident who has come to regard the area as his own private possession, and resents every intrusion of the public, however harmless. I feel quite certain that the real diversity of interests are, or should be, so small as in no way to hinder the combination of both in striving for the further powers which are so necessary.

The chief occupations of the district are undoubtedly sheep farming and catering for the tourist. Beyond the occasional gate left open, or the rare collapse of a rickety wall under some clumsy would-be climber, the sheep breeders suffer not at all; while to the hotel proprietor, the landlady, and the farmer's wife, the tourist brings nothing but advantage.

As for the landowner and the retired resident, the tradition



THE LAKES

that holds in the Lake District concerning the large landowner and the smaller 'statesman' is a fine one. Throughout the past the visitor has not only been made cordially welcome, but has been allowed the freedom of the fells, and though many will say that this outstanding asset of the Lake District—the privilege to roam where one will—came about in the first instance through the happy absence of grouse or other game, and therefore of all reason for denying the visitor this great enjoyment, yet we must thank the landowners for having not only done all they could to prevent the spoliation of the district, but for the public-spirited way in which they have set out to improve (as far as they could) the beauties of the daleland by considerate planting and by a steadfast refusal to allow the erection of unsuitable buildings.

But to a general rule like this there must always be exceptions. The breaking up of large estates may throw whole valleys and lakes into the market, which nowadays means into danger; and even where estates descend to absentee heirs whose love and interest in the district is little or non-existent, the by-laws and the planning schemes, interpreted by the local authorities as now constituted, are not sufficient to help us when dangers arise. Planning is a new idea, and new ideas germinate but slowly in the minds of our northern county and district councillors, and we are too near Scotland and too hard-bitten to visualize the spending of large sums in compensating an owner for refusing him the right to build where he would, just for the sake of saving a viewpoint or protecting a vista.

Besides which, well, we all know Colonel Smith; he is a good fellow and his people have had the estate for nigh on a hundred years. We can't very well prevent him from putting up houses at six to an acre along that lane that winds so beautifully near the shores of the lake. And as for this plan for Bill Brown's bungalow; the poor chap has saved for years to build this little shack for himself. He can't afford to go to an architect (so he imagines) or if he could, then he wouldn't have the money for native slate. The best we can do is to see he uses grey asbestos instead of pink for the roof, and trust the

thing won't look too bad when it's up—at any rate from a distance.

Now that sort of thing is going on every day in the district. The planning schemes—and there are half a dozen of these to cover the area instead of the one that there should be—are all still in the making, but when made I have not the least doubt that they will be entirely inadequate to do anything more than mitigate some of the worst offences that *might* be perpetrated. This is, of course, not ignoring the fact that for some years there has been in existence a Local Advisory Panel, to which the architects of the district have given their services, with the desire to stem the tide of shoddy and inappropriate building. It shows considerable progress that this Panel is consistently having plans referred to it by the Lancashire and Westmorland Planning Committees, while the Cumberland County Council, who are responsible for planning the major part of the Cumberland Lake District, have been able to get a scheme going by which every plan that comes before them is automatically inspected and approved, improved or disapproved, by members of the local Architectural Association, who meet twice a month in order voluntarily to carry out this excellent piece of work.

The Lake District Advisory Panel has also issued a short leaflet on how to build in the district, and has produced a series of Panel plans of small houses, which can be used for a relatively nominal fee by those who think they cannot afford to call in an architect.

But all this work, helpful as it is, is only advisory in its nature, and everywhere inept buildings are still being put up.

Many who come to the Lake District do not realize either how small an area it covers or how really minute are the fells in comparison to the impression of grandeur which they give. A radius of ten miles from High White Stones to the north-west of Grasmere would take in all that the casual visitor thinks of as the Lake District. But in any proper scheme for the preservation of this district as a special National Park Area we must remember the importance of maintaining

an equally stringent supervision of the fringe area which is, by its very physical nature, much more liable to be 'developed'—and so spoilt by short-sighted exploitation. We must, therefore, insist on not a ten-, but roughly a twenty-mile radius from our centre. And I am convinced that the boundary, which is rapidly receiving ever wider recognition through its appearance in the publications of the 'Friends of the Lake District' and on numerous maps in the press, is the right one. This leaves the coast at Seascale, follows round the foot of the fells near Egremont, and along the main Egremont-Cockermouth road. It excludes the Cockermouth urban district and makes up behind Binsey to take in Uldale and Ireby and Caldbeck; from there it runs south-east to take in Greystoke and Dacre but excludes the urban district of Penrith. It then roughly follows A 6 south over Shap to Kendal, which town is also excluded; it continues south to Levens before turning east to the Kent estuary and Morecambe Bay. It includes Grange and the whole Cartmel peninsula, but crosses the Furness peninsula just north of Ulverston to exclude the mining and manufacturing area surrounding Barrow, Dalton, Ulverston, and Askam. Crossing Duddon Sands it excludes the small isolated mining town of Millom, and regains the coast of the Irish Sea west of Haverigg Point.

It must be remembered in considering what is being done by the powers that be to further planning and preservation, that the Lake District, as just defined, lies within three counties, and that for local government purposes these are subdivided into four urban districts and parts of eight rural districts. The sturdy independence of our Dalesfolk has made itself felt in the decisions not only of the district councils but of the county councils to plan separately; and although after much pressure a joint advisory body for the three counties was brought into existence, this may be said hardly to have functioned in any important particular.

But even had there been a sufficiently broad outlook to have brought one scheme for the whole of the Lake District

into being, it would still have had a purely local outlook, would have remained largely unrepresentative of those who could be said to know something of the aesthetic considerations which should be paramount in planning a district of this kind, and above all would have been without the necessary funds to make planning more than the pious aspiration that I fear it will be at the best. Besides, what control have planning schemes over the large waterworks undertakings which have made the vale of Thirlmere the hard and 'un-Lakes-like' valley that it now is, or over the schemes of the Forestry Commission which are fast blanketing out the essence of the colouring and contours of the Whinlatter Pass and the Ennerdale valley, and bid fair soon to ruin far more lovely Eskdale and Dunnerdale?

While the physical nature of the Lake District with its valleys radiating in all directions from a central massif must work for disunity in local government and all other social activities, it has been a great blessing in putting a natural break on the development of the valley heads which are for the most part culs-de-sac as regards the king's highway. Scattered farms are still the only buildings at the heads of most of our valleys and the paths that struggle up and over into the next valley are still the joy of the walker, unworried by the hoot or the hustle of the motor. How fortunately different we are in this respect from Snowdonia, where practically every valley has a major motor road through it! That this has not been sufficiently realized by the local authorities has been shown from time to time by the various proposals to 'improve' the Hardknott-Wrynose road, to build a road over the Styhead Pass, even to build a road over Esk Hause itself. And these have not been just vague schemes in the air, for all must now know that the old rough and dangerous coaching track over the Honister Pass has lately been turned into a well-groomed but very much more dangerous motorists' highway, to the complete loss of all those who formerly were able to walk in peace and appreciation from Seatoller to Buttermere.

It must not be thought that we wish to bar the motorist

from the Lake District—of course the number of those who come to it in cars grows apace, and we are anxious that the approaches to the district and the existing main roads through it should be safe and adequate. But we are convinced that to add to the number of places—passes, dale heads, and lake shores—to which the motorist can at present go, will only kill the very thing that walker, cyclist, and many a motorist, too, come here to experience. For the existence of a motor road (however discreetly planned), with or even without the traffic it is bound to create, must destroy for the sensitive seeker for wild and natural beauty the sense of seclusion and 'awayness' that are the necessary concomitants to a real appreciation of the scenery.

Perhaps it will be thought here that I am begging the question as to what is the real protection that should be extended to the wilds and solitudes of our mountain lands. If I would restrict the motorist, wink at the pass-storming cyclist and encourage the walker, am I not being illogical, and is not the only preservation of these places one that will exclude to all intents and purposes mankind at large? And is there, therefore, not something to be said for the shooters and the stalkers, in that they do their best to maintain this strict preservation, only breaking through it themselves for a few short weeks in the year? My answer, and one to which I believe many would subscribe, is that in Great Britain there exist (though unequally distributed) enough lovely uncultivated moorlands and mountains which, if all were thrown open for public access, would, except near the big centres of population, still remain in essence the wilds and solitudes they are now.

Cheaper, more speedy means of reaching these districts, and the promised increase of leisure need not frighten us into the fear that they will be lost. We can rely I am sure on the comparative numerical paucity of those who appreciate them, who need them, and who seek them out. The number doubtless grows, but it would have to double itself like the historic grain of corn on the chessboard—that is, at a rate we must know

is, in the nature of things, impossible—before there would be any fear that we were in danger of losing what I am sure is something of the highest spiritual value. Granted, however, for the sake of argument, this impossible increase, together with the right of access and the facilities of time and money and easy transit, it should then not be impossible, in fact might be very desirable (perhaps it is even so at the present juncture), that some tracts of the least accessible Highlands or Islands should be made really prohibited reserves. Even in England and Wales smaller areas might be found for this purpose: Northumberland between the North Tyne and the Wall, some section of Dartmoor or Exmoor, the Plymlymon district. But to propose such a restricted area within the Lake District is unthinkable, and I feel sure on all counts undesirable.

The need for a national body, with over-riding powers where local authorities are concerned, for an area such as this—a body whose first concern should be for the aesthetics of the district which, when all is said and done, must be its chief financial asset—should be obvious. I cannot think that the county and district councils or their national organizations who fight for them in Parliament will be so prejudiced as to try and prevent the bringing<sup>1</sup> into existence of a National Park scheme for places with such outstanding claims as the Lake District, Snowdonia, the Peak and, with diminishing emphasis, a dozen or so other suitable localities. Whether a National Park scheme be a forerunner or just a part of the idea of a national plan for the whole of the countryside, it is surely one for which we can ill afford to wait any longer, but one that must be brought into existence with all speed and which I am sure will have the support and co-operation of all but the most selfish and short-sighted.

At present various societies exist, anxious to do what they can to help the idea of preservation in the Lake District. The National Trust owns some thirty properties throughout the area, varying in size from one to 3,000 acres. But even better than this sporadic ownership, which can never hope to be brought to completion and is often obtained at exorbitant



cost, is that body's restrictive covenants over the Buttermere lands, where they have either bought the land and resold it at its agricultural value with covenants that it shall remain undeveloped, or bought out the right of owners to develop without the Trust's permission, which, presumably, would be withheld in all places where building would be undesirable, such as on the lake frontage or on conspicuous fell-sides. The Council for the Preservation of Rural England has also worked hard in support of the local bodies, but its efforts have naturally not always been crowned with the complete success we would have liked. The Lake District Safeguarding Society, limited in numbers and in personnel to local residents and landowners, has kept a vigilant eye on the many little points that go so far to affect the beauty of our most sensitive landscape. But recently out of this desire for a really effective control under a National Park scheme there has grown from a representative committee into a nation-wide society the body known as the Friends of the Lake District, which already numbers members in the thousands and has branches in many large centres of population. Though interested in every aspect of preservation and development affecting the district, its chief aim is to have the Lake District scheduled as the first National Park in Great Britain. The Friends of the Lake District may be considered by some of the supporters of the previously mentioned more conservative bodies to have shown regrettable intransigence in its attitude to the Forestry Commission's activities in the Lake District—an attitude that brought down on it the Premier's complimentary judgment that it is a body that will never be satisfied. For those who put the sacred beauty of Lakeland first it is surely a good thing that there is, fighting for it, a society with that qualification. Viewed from afar, the activities of such societies as the National Trust and the C.P.R.E., praiseworthy as they may be when taken in detail and unrelated to the major issues of the general struggle for the maintenance of the beautiful and the unspoilt, are yet perhaps but a palliative, or even a narcotic, and tend to lull us all into a false feeling of security—a belief that

all that is possible is being done, whereas in reality here and there a beauty spot is being saved at a great price, and a few of the more egregious wrongs to the landscape are being ever so slightly mitigated, while all along the line we are really beating a hasty retreat, and surging around the protected beauty spot sweeps the tide of bad, wrongly-placed, wasteful, selfish, and, above all, beauty-destroying development, while the hard-won compromises to the credit of the C.P.R.E. are drowned in the onrush of the activities of the all-powerful Ministries of Transport and of War, and the less mighty, but unfortunately less vulnerable and therefore more irresponsible, Commissioners of Electricity and Forestry.

I am convinced that only an entirely different line of attack on the whole problem can hope for success, and that must be through the Government's realization of the importance of the problem showing itself by the creation of a Ministry, or at least a Commission, of the Amenities, and in this work the creation of a National Parks Committee may be a first—but only a first—step.

What are the reasons that bring not only the tourist but also the resident in ever greater numbers to this district? Certainly not the weather with its renowned rainfall—although our comparative freedom from fog is a boon we must not forget. Certainly not its accessibility. To some, of course, its comparative inaccessibility might be one of its attractions. For some it is the only place in England where they have much scope to indulge in their pastime of rock climbing; others find here the finest inland sheets of water for their boat-sailing; and some may be enticed here by the lake fishing. But these must all be as a handful in comparison with those who come to experience the beauty and grandeur of this precious little region, and for the comparative solitude they may find in its inner recesses and on its upper fells, and those others who combine these joys with that of rambling and of climbing throughout the length and breadth of this group of mountains. The tremendous growth of appreciation for this type of recreation may to some of the older residents appear a

danger which threatens their own long-cherished sense of seclusion. But the Lake District—small as it is—can still easily absorb the crowds that come to it increasingly. I am convinced that the young Rambler who comes once and then comes again is the first person to realize the necessity for the efforts to keep the district unspoilt and is the first to support these efforts. As for those who come from idle curiosity and get no farther than Bowness promenade, well, I don't think that many of them come again!

The Youth Hostel movement in the Lake District, which started with a hostel at Wray Castle on Windermere five or six years ago, had last year grown to such an extent that nearly 60,000 nights were spent in the present hostels by the young tramp and cyclist. I feel fairly certain that out of all those who were then enabled to visit the Lakes—many for the first time—we are building up a really vast body of folk who, as they grow up, will do all that they can to see the district remains as unharmed as when they first came to know and love it.

In dealing here with the Lake District and its troubles and needs, it is its own peculiar requirements to which I wish to draw attention, though the problem is in many respects the same problem throughout the whole country. Litter, advertisements, petrol pumps, shacks, ribbon development, ruthless road widening, disfiguring electricity distribution mains, bad building, unnecessary tree felling; from all of these we have, of course, suffered, but we here can say gratefully that in the matter of roadside advertising, ugly filling-stations, and wrong building material at any rate we have a fairly clean slate. Our difficulties very often arise from the fact that unlike other districts where you can say to the builder or the garage owner or the electricity undertaker: 'You can't do this here, but it will be quite all right just there, round the corner,' with us there is no 'round the corner'; the whole area is and should be kept beautiful, and from the very nature of the ground so much of it can at any one time be seen that we must either insist on what would seem a churlish 'No' to these threats, or, because

of our lack of power, we must woefully give way, knowing that though we have perhaps been able to save some lovely stretch of road or lake-side, we have spoilt another one only a little less precious. Then, too, it must be realized that in a district which people come to primarily to look at, everything is far more noticeable than it would be in a less renowned country-side. There are many who see nothing disfiguring in a high-tension line swinging across 'ordinary' country from one steel pylon to another, but there can be no doubt that had the Central Electricity Board insisted on taking their secondary line direct from Penrith to the west coast through the Vale of Keswick and over Whinlatter, it would have spoilt their loveliness—or what remains of it where the Forestry Commission have not got to work—for an infinite number of folk. The pity is that it is hard to impress those whose job it is to carry electricity about the country or to build up state forests or to supply large towns with water, that there is anything in 'all this amenity bunkum.' Many people like pylons. They were designed and approved by some eminent architect; therefore they must be quite all right in the Vale of Keswick! Thirlmere was a poor little lake; look what a fine sheet of water it is now! And as for the spruce plantations of the Forestry Commission, trees (even spruce!) are obviously, for them, much more beautiful than a bare and rough fell-side.

Yet all these interests have of late realized that there is a big and growing body of opinion in the country to which they must, perhaps reluctantly, perhaps half-admiringly, give attention, so that we have the hope of Haweswater not becoming the dull conifer-enshrouded and motor-road-encircled reservoir that Thirlmere is. We have the Forestry Commission planting hardwood screens and giving up—at a price—other plantable land, while promising not to plant an important area of central Lakeland. And we have the Central Electricity Board not insisting on its original scheme through the Vale of Keswick, and going so far as to alter its proposed alternative route on the fringe of the district by two or three miles. But this is not really enough, and the

time and money spent in organizing public opinion to impress these bodies should, we hope, soon be needed no longer. I am convinced that there is enough interest, appreciation, and love of a special area like ours to ask the Government right away to recognize that fact and not allow these continual threats (which show no sign of abating) to spoil what should, and what would in any other civilized country, have been considered a priceless national heritage and treated as such.

If we were in a position to lay down a series of guiding laws, rules for the planning and preservation of this territory as we would have it be, I would suggest that the following offer at least a few of the axioms, without adherence to which we cannot hope to have the district as we would have it be :

1. All existing high and open fell country should be sterilized from any form of change or development other than its improvement for grazing purposes.

2. The dale heads should be permanently restricted from all development other than the alteration of, or addition to, existing farm buildings.

3. Only very limited additions to the number of existing buildings should be permitted in the middle reaches of the dales. And such new buildings should be grouped around existing hamlets or farms.

4. Very careful planning, but with rather higher density zoning, should be permitted on the lower reaches of the valleys or around the existing towns and villages.

5. All electricity transmission lines, either high or low tension, and distribution mains, should be placed underground.

6. Where the postal telegraph authorities at present find it economic to use a suspended cable instead of single wires these nucleolated lines should be laid below the road.

7. No road improvements should be undertaken without plans having first been approved by the National Park authority.

8. No further large-scale water undertakings should be permitted in the district, and small-scale schemes should have their plans approved by the Park authority.

9. All proposed and existing reservoirs and catchment areas should be thrown open to the free use of the community, the necessary steps being taken to purify the water after it has left the reservoirs.

10. The Forestry Commission should only be allowed to acquire land for planting outside the 500 square miles originally asked for as a sacrosanct area by the amenity societies, and in these cases only after consultation with the National Park authority.

11. All roadside advertisements, other than those dealing with property to be let or sold, current notices, etc., should be prohibited.

12. Stringent regulations (such as exist in the Irish Free State) regarding

the cutting of woods and trees and the compulsory replanting of these, should be put into force.

13. All plans for new buildings should go before a competent architectural panel or committee (as is at present being done with success in Cumberland), and the recommendations of these panels should be strictly enforced.

14. While provision should be made for aerodromes on the fringes of the Lake District National Park area, all low flying over the area should be prohibited. The routes north should be canalized so as to follow A 6 and the L.M.S. main line, or the Cumberland coast.

15. All motor-boats plying on Windermere, Ullswater, Coniston, and Derwentwater should be, as far as is possible, completely silenced, motor-boats being entirely prohibited on the smaller lakes.

16. All development of any kind in so far as it could be considered to affect the amenities of the district, would first have to be sanctioned by the National Park authority.

17. In all uncultivated open fell country the present privilege of access should be conferred as by right.

18. The National Park authority should have powers to close any existing highways to any class of traffic, together with powers to dedicate additional rights of way.

19. All existing quarries and mines should comply with regulations regarding the siting of their dumps, and only such new undertakings be allowed to come into existence as would be permitted by the National Park authority.

As has been shown, the present preservation societies can do little more than hope to influence the local authorities, and Government departments, through their propaganda; and these are in most cases either powerless and/or unwilling to put the question of amenity first. Two things are therefore necessary: the bringing into existence of the most suitable body for working such rules as I have set down; and the necessary money to pay such compensation as can rightly be claimed by the landowners for the curtailment of their liberties and for their real financial loss.

It is not my province to suggest exactly how a scheme for National Parks may best be brought about, but it would seem to me to be clear that such local committees as will be dealing with the different areas throughout Great Britain should have not only an Act of Parliament upon which they can rely, but a definite Government Commission, or better still Government Department to which the committees shall be responsible and which may as occasion arises alter and strengthen the powers

of the local committees. The committees themselves should be fully representative of the national and local points of view and of all those interests—recreational, artistic, scientific—which are specially concerned with the ideals underlying the scheme. The committees should in no way usurp the general powers of the county and district councils except where these affect the scenic or recreational amenities, and here their fiat should be paramount.

As to the financing of the scheme, the local committees should be financed nationally through the Government Committee or Department, and be no additional burden on the local rates. The chief expense would be compensation, and here there should be a radical redecision as regards what is justifiable, and the over-generous attitude of the Town and Country Planning Act should not be taken as a model.

Building in the Lake District is increasing, but land on the whole is still cheap, and in the case of all agricultural holdings compensation should not be paid on anything more than the value of the land as used at the time of purchase.

As the Government pay an amount running into six figures towards the upkeep of the royal parks in London and Edinburgh, it is surely not unreasonable to demand that a larger sum than this should be paid to finance our National Parks, and I have for several years past put forward and sponsored the idea of making a beginning with a £ for £ grant on the lines of the famous Codex. The Friends of the Lake District stand behind such a scheme, and while not desirous of raising funds for actual purchase, are keen to do so for the compensation necessary to make planning in the Lake District, with the National Park ideal in view, at least the partial safeguard it might be and is not.

Without all this, and without a speedy move to put these suggestions into being, I fear that England will lose very rapidly what many of us regard as our most glorious piece of national landscape.

# *Wales : Its Character and its Dangers*

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EDMUND VALE

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IN Wales it is only the English who are in a hurry. The Welsh people are thrifty and industrious; there is nothing devil-may-care about them, and they are never in a hurry. One incident remains in my mind which gave me a clue to this fact. It was in early 1915. Myself, disguised as an army officer, was mounted on a fussy Douglas motor-bicycle. I was riding along a lonely road in the foothills of the Berwen Mountains. Presently the back of a spring cart came into view. A solitary man was seated in it driving a large and powerful farm-horse. At the sound of my approach the horse took fright and bolted. With such a powerful beast and such rotten reins the man had no chance whatever. I found them in a field about half a mile farther on. The horse was standing quietly between broken shafts; the man, with a bleeding face, was crawling towards him on all-fours; the cart was wrecked, and had turned turtle as well. I had left the bicycle some way back and, having seen the horse taken by the head again, walked forward to condole. The man had only one protest to make. 'The worst of it is,' he said, 'I was going to the dentist.' Then he added: 'But he is sure to come again this day next week.'

The temperament of the Welshman is like that. But while he does not hurry himself, he does not interfere with other people who do. So long as he is left alone, he is content to allow the hasteners to do their hastening as they please. And this supine indifference to the hustler is one of the main causes of the spoliation of the Welsh countryside.

That slackness in the matter of the time-factor is coupled with another national weakness which, when linked to the



first, has proved fatal to both the urban and rural amenities of Wales. The point is a difficult one to lay before the uninitiated because it is a first-rate paradox. The Welshman is an artist by nature. He has the temperament and the instinct. But his long isolation, linguistic and geographical, has atrophied all his artistic senses save one. He is blind to everything in art except music and the power and value of words. Having laid low the magnificence of one of God's masterpieces in scenery by building a hideous chapel in the midst of it, he will enter that building and pour forth such inspired utterances of rhetoric that no one, human or angelic, could fail to be melted by them. The quarryman will return home from mangling the hill-side, and write a poem which may gain him the first prize and perhaps the bardic crown in the next eisteddfod. He is equally blind to his own vandalisms and those of the hustlers.

That is not quite the end of the paradox. The Welshman's imagination is both retentive and creative. Though Nonconformity has banned the fairies, he has the true folk sense. Every acre of ground that comes within his ken has a certain significance either as holding the remembrance of some deed or person, or as bearing some peculiar shape that has, of itself, a meaning. So that where the mountain-side is unspoiled it is illuminated with a lore of its own. This is, in itself, no small 'amenity.' Scenery is best where it is enriched with romance: and if that romance is indigenous and matches it, as song matches music, the scene is made unique and incomparable and put beyond the levelling tendencies of geologists and photographers.

So, while the Welshman follows up the works of Nature by giving them a strong individuality, and thereby a character-stamp which is different from anything else in Great Britain, he is utterly complaisant in the matter of their defilement.

Before speaking of the hustlers and the more leisurely spoilers, let us take a rapid survey of the assets of Wales—in back-grounds. Her mountain architecture is of five types, differentiated according to the nature of the rock—Limestone,

Devonian (Old Red Sandstone), Silurian, Cambrian, Pre-Cambrian. This is a very striking assemblage. In colours alone it gives you white, red, grey, and blue-grey. The Pre-Cambrian is full of surprises. Along the coast this most ancient formation gives you the sparkling white crystalline rock that forms the cliff arches of Rhoscolyn, the lurid red of jasper pinnacles and the veined, flesh-coloured marble that rises from the clear sea at Llanddwyn in what you might call mermaid-formation.

The geography of Wales seems providentially arranged for showing off these rock masses in a dual setting—they take their turns as inland massifs and coastal prominences. There is limestone both in the north and the south. In the former province it builds the striking fastness of Puffin Island which stands high out of the sea like a miniature Socotra, and the two Ormes Heads, where the interval between is recessed to a scimitar bay. In the south it makes the gleaming cliffs of Lower Pembrokeshire and stately Gower; up-country, those gorges in upper Carmarthenshire where rivers rush from the heart of cave-riddled hills. Moreover, in the same place, it has been wrought into that perilous bastion crowned by the mysterious ruin of Cerrig Cennin Castle. Through it, in a wider but not less imposing gorge, the River Wye goes down to the sea at Chepstow.

The Devonian occurs only briefly in the north, framing a gem-like bay in the east of Anglesey and shaping the falls and fantastic bed of the River Cymfal in Lower Carnarvonshire. In the south it builds two ranges of mountains, called respectively the Carmarthen Vans and the Black Mountains. The feature of the former is a long red escarpment, whose hues and glooms contrast with the two blue lakes at its feet that lie on a shelf open to the sky.

The Silurian rocks form a deep chain which sweeps northwards in a curve from the volcanic heaps of the Prescelly Mountains at the back of St. David's Head, rising in an upward trend to the graceful eminence of Plynlymon. Their characteristic is to build smooth, rounded tops, which clothe them-

selves with a sheep-pasture of rough grass. This rock also makes deep ravines and gorges, though quite unlike those of the limestone, for the sides, while steep, are thickly wooded. The Rivers Teify, Rheidol, and Ystwyth derive their exquisite charm from the manner of their descent to the sea through these deep clefts of wood and crag. Earlier on, in summarizing their colours, I have labelled the Silurian rocks as grey. But where they come down to the sea on the Cardiganshire coast they show blue, and are banded with veins of white quartz. Blue, too, was the stone they quarried for St. David's Cathedral, giving its ancient interior an ethereal light.

North of the Dovey the Silurian rocks go on. But the mountains are no longer smooth. They are saddled and reft from below by eruptive masses which make their summits and their sides rugged and spectacular. The strata is contorted and tilted and, from under the base of the system, at intervals, the Cambrian rocks sweep upwards. This is a country of high isolated mountains, sundered by deep valleys linked by passes, valleys that were once richly wooded but are now, for the most part, bare. The Pre-Cambrian system is represented almost wholly by the Isle of Anglesey, a low, rolling plateau.

Thus it will be seen that the sheer rock-bottom background is wonderfully varied within a small area. If the hills were bare of everything variety would still be the keynote of the country, for, as I have tried to indicate, the colours of the rock and the shapes of the mountains are distinctive. When vegetation is added the varieties of scenic character become bewildering. You may go from valley to valley within the same geologic boundary and find differences in each so strong as to mark them as separate regions.

If we could look back only two hundred years we should find these differences far more accentuated. I fancy that even in the eighteenth century the bare valleys of Benglog and Nant Ffrancon retained a fair remnant of their ancient birch woods. At any rate the birch woods were the pride of North Wales in the fifteenth century, as the poet, David Ap Gwilym, constantly

alludes to them in his passionate verses. The stumps of these forests still remain in the marshes. Much less than two hundred years ago Nant Gwynant still had its forest of ash. The name means White Valley, and is doubtless chosen from the peculiar lustre of the bark which gives to a wood of ash (seen out of the leafing season) a peculiar glimmer of whiteness. Even in the height of its foliage, the ash with its pinnate leaf and its soft, mysterious grey-green has a power of lightening the bulk of a view—if I may so put it. Just enough of these ashes remain in Nant Gwynant to show what their power must have been as forming a base to that close-up view of Snowdon, a view which, incidentally, has as its centre-piece to-day a pipeline like a bathroom drain coming down the mountain-side to a red ridge-tiled generating-station of mock Gothic design.

A third native timber, the oak, flourished quite luxuriantly round Bettws-y-Coed and from there all along the rising valley of the Llugwy, as far as Capel Curig, until the years during and immediately after the War. These woods were the glory of Bettws-y-Coed, and gave it a sort of breathless glamour on a hot summer's day, suffusing a moist, fragrant breath, scrolling the brazen crags, seeming even to modulate by their presence the sound of the two rushing rivers. In the upper valley there were places from which you got a startling view of Snowdon, an aquiline, azure portrait poised above the soft cumulus of the oaken woods. I have never looked on that view without saying to myself: 'This is Wales! There is nowhere else in all the world that could show a like picture!' Yet, in spite of all protests, the Forestry Commission cut those woods down and replaced them with plantations of conifer.

Perhaps it would be of interest to trace the story of the ravaging (or, as some think, the development) of Wales. But it should first be clearly understood how unready, compared with England, the country was for the rough handling of commercial enterprise. It was a land of shepherds and small farmers, a people whose ideas were founded on an ancient tribal system. They abhorred towns and even villages, for

their old social unit was the parish whose centre was not the manor-house, but the church. They lived in a scattered community, each house isolated by its own farm boundaries, and they were self-supporting, depending for extraneous things on pedlars and the drover (*northman*) who was commissioned to bring things from the distant towns of the Border and England.

The exploitation of Wales began in the eighteenth century, at which time also came the Nonconformist secession. Both movements began in the south. At the roots of the Red Sandstone mountains the coal measures are exposed in the long valleys which run down towards the Glamorganshire coast. Coal had been got there and exported from Swansea as early as the twelfth century, but never in sufficient quantities to damage the scenery. Iron there was, too. In the late eighteenth century, when the Industrial Revolution began, a demand for both these commodities set in with a boom. From the north of England and from abroad came a vast community to settle at Neath, Swansea, and, later, Cardiff. The coal and the port facilities made Swansea a centre of world-wide importance for the smelting of all kinds of metal whose ores were imported from abroad, and a region, once among the most beautiful in Wales, was overlaid with factories, pits, spoil-banks, and workmen's squalid dwellings. Canals came, then railways. No one gave a thought to anything but the speeding-up of the industries.

In the north, except for a corner of Flintshire, where the coal measures cropped out from under the hem of the limestone, the coal and iron rush did not disturb the landscape much. But, with the growing demand for housing in England and South Wales, to shelter the new population which had hurried from the country to join the industrial bands, and with the extending transport facilities of the canal, there came a demand for roofing slate. This material, belonging chiefly to the Cambrian rocks, made its appearance at some of the choicest spots. The glorious mountain, Moelwen, was almost wholly composed of it, so was the forefoot of Snowdon, the eastern

face of the Pass of Llanberis, the western cliffs at the entrance to the Pass of Nant Ffrancon, and the southern rampart in the wild and secluded vale of Corris. Here, again, without a thought as to appearances, immense spoil-banks were made to exude into the valley bottoms, and the mean settlements of Ffestiniog, Nantlle, Pen-y-Grocs, Bethesda, and others, were straggled over the hill-sides.

At the same time the prospecting mania for copper, manganese, lead, and even gold, raged up and down the country. The mountains were scarred with trial borings, each with its fan of debris. In the Conway Valley whole works were set up, and then abandoned, without demolition, when the ore of lead was found to be only in pockets. Nobody cared how the workings were opened, or how the ruins were left!

In 1850 the Irish route via Holyhead, which had been served by mail-coach through the mountains, was replaced by a railway along the coast of the Irish Sea. This threw open a magnificent coast-line, with sandy bays, and a highly scenic background. Here was something which all the money in the world could not buy; and the beaches were practically virgin territory. If a little care had been bestowed on the planning and architecture of the new bathing-towns they would to-day be the envy of the world.

But although the sea, and the scenery behind it, were admittedly the assets which the new squatters from England and Scotland came to develop, they saw no connection between the two. It was a paradise for the jerry-builder. As to the local inhabitant, he drifted into the gamble and made money where he could. The new art was not a matter of words but accommodation. He learned all the worst tricks about running up apartment houses and laying out sea-fronts, 'as in England,' with a minimum expenditure of material—and worse—of thought. It is interesting to compare these works with two earlier pre-railway resorts, Aberystwyth and Aberayron. The model of that time was Bath. Though Aberystwyth has been overlaid with all the horrors of the later hustle you can still see the dignified relic of the Bath model in Laura

Square. Aberayron is little altered from its first lay-out. But, in Wales, a country of distinctive things, why a model, good or bad, borrowed from any other country?

Ugly housing was not the only effacement which the newly opened coast had to bear. There came a demand for railway ballast, for kerb-stones and paving setts in the fast expanding towns of England. The great headland of Penmaenmawr, one of the most striking coastal features to be found anywhere in the British Isles, proved to be made of a suitable material, and at once fell a victim. In spite of daily blasting and smashing it still bulks portentously in the landscape, but its beauty is entirely destroyed. It is not as if Penmaenmawr was the only place from which one could obtain first-rate diorite. There are great quantities of it lying untouched in much less distinguished places in various parts of the kingdom. On economic grounds, therefore, there was no excuse for this vandalism. It was only allowed to happen because no one raised a dissentient voice when private enterprise took a convenient opportunity.

To come to our own times, the road-widening craze has done an immense amount of damage in many places where there was no need for hurry, where a pretty winding lane meant a great deal more even to the summer visitor than a bleak black band of tarmac. The chief sufferer in this respect was Anglesey. I admit that we dismissed this island in an earlier paragraph as a 'rolling plateau,' but at that point we were only discussing background structure. Anglesey, like the rest of Wales, has a superb native beauty of her own. But it is of a rare and special kind, and depends on the relationships of scale.

The scenery of Anglesey is small and fairy-like. The bays, the rocks, the farms, the fields, the walls, even the little black cows, have the peculiar charm of the miniature. To break scale in this island is to break its charm.

The last threat which, in its way, is the most subtle of them all, is the demand for water-power and water-supply. Before the War we lost Dolgarrog waterfall, the finest in Wales. It was piped from its source in Eigiau Lake by the Aluminium

Corporation. This plant was later taken over by the North Wales Power Company, who also made use of two neighbouring lakes. These operations are perhaps excusable on economic grounds, though many flaws in the economic argument could be found. The most useful criticism that can be directed against all such schemes is that in the beginning nothing but immediate convenience is ever considered. The question as to whether some other natural reservoir would not be as useful (one whose scenic value in the landscape was of less importance) does not arise.

But the demands of water-power are not likely to be so urgent in the near future as those of water-supply. After the recent droughts we have had, and the talking that has been done on the subject, we may at any time expect a sudden reckless raid on those mountain lakes which still remain virgin. Before the droughts, and the subsequent alarmist talks, the little seaside resort of Llanfairfechan decided that its water-supply was inadequate. It had been served for many years from a small artificial reservoir on the lower slopes of the hills above the town. But the reservoir had for a long time been suffering from a leak which seemed to be incurable. When it was resolved that more water was needed the town might quite well have built a larger and more watertight reservoir on the same slopes. Instead, the local council decided to tap a lake in the mountains, known as Llyn Anafon, or Aber Lake. This they accordingly did without opposition. Aber Lake was one of the most delightful tarns in Wales. You might well sit by it for a whole day doing nothing but absorbing the genius and the charm of the place. But that charm was largely dependent on the detachment of the whole scene from any visible or knowable active human contact. Now it is inherently impossible to feel this about a lake which is used for general household purposes. Even if dams, pipes, and sluices are all incredibly well concealed you know that your lake is not really wild, not even so wild and genuine, perhaps, as an artificial one in a town park. The solitude is a mock one; you cannot be healed by it.



Sentiment of this kind stands a poor chance when pitted against immediate practical politics. But, in the end, the verdict is with the visitor, and his reactions are natural enough, albeit, as a rule, unrelated to poetry. Already he is turning a more penetrating eye on Nature and searching for her realities. It is not unlikely that in the near future he will prefer that his walks should take him to lakes which he knows to be inviolate.

In spite of all that has been done to damage Wales, her beauty is, in many parts, still intact. But the constant sapping goes on. Much of the damage in loss of native woodland (hardwood trees) and in ugly buildings could be restored if the will emanated from her own people to do it. But the urgent matter is to organize some form of public indignation to stop the filching of what is left. This, too, ought to come from her own people. But will it? A scheme of restoration or even preservation of Wales based on a unilateral English Act of Parliament would never achieve the desired end. All the same, the spoliation was done by the alien hustlers and hurriers, and it is now their cue to arouse the incentive and subscribe the means to set things right again.

# The Scottish Scene

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GEORGE SCOTT-MONCRIEFF

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To endeavour to describe modern Scotland and her problems is a vast job. Scotland has long been ripe for the reconsideration she is beginning to receive to-day. The Scot if there is to be any future for him save as a colonizer, in England or elsewhere, has got to re-orientate his conception of his country. For the most part, Scots have a very vague notion of their land and its history; for knowledge of Scottish history is only accessible to those who have made a special study of it, either privately or at the university. To all intents and purposes, it is not taught at our schools. It is therefore difficult in a brief essay to sketch in the historical background so necessary for any incisive understanding of the contemporary scene: for that I would recommend Mr. Colin Walkinshaw's short but excellent historical study, *The Scots Tragedy* (Routledge, 7s. 6d.), and rather than endeavour to put Scotland's history into a couple of pages, I shall quote the words with which Mr. Walkinshaw sums up the theory that prefaced the industrial development of the last century at whose latter end we so unhappily find ourselves.

If one has a turn for the Romantic one may regard Adam Smith's great book as Scotland's revenge upon the world and upon herself—an unconscious revenge, but a devastating one. Cut off from the fulfilment of her nationality, foiled in her effort to become a new and conquering Israel, she had produced a creed which was truly international and which, for much more than a century, was to dominate the thought and a good many of the actions of the civilized world.

Quite simply, it was the philosophy of greed. Mr. Chesterton has put the kernel of this extraordinary and revolutionary theory very neatly: 'If everybody worked meanly and sordidly for money the result would be a prosperity which would prove the benevolence of Providence.' Scotland had been denied, since the Union, anything but a parody of government.

And now a Scotsman had proved, with immense lucidity, learning, and the logical force of genius, that anything but a parody of government was wrong. Men were put into the world to plunder the earth and each other, and if only their plundering was sufficiently unrestricted the Golden Age would indeed return. To a people who had lost every other power of national self-expression, who, in their poverty, had been forced into union with a neighbouring State that was already the wealthiest in the world, it was a gospel of hope and fulfilment, and the peculiar qualities of Scottish religion were not of a kind to strengthen it against this particular denial of the basic ideas of Christianity.

It is important to bear in mind that Scotland's boom was more sudden and more intense than England's. In England the Industrial Age was firmly founded upon mercantile tradition, and soundly backed by London, the financial centre of the world. In Scotland it was superimposed upon a nation that in many ways could more naturally have developed on the lines of Norway; with agriculture and fisheries the mainstay of her economic life. Indeed, she would be in a far sounder state to-day if she had not jettisoned her agriculture and fisheries for an industrial life that was basically artificial. Englishmen may regret facets of their own industrialism, but it was never one tithe as artificial as Scotland's, which had begun to decay before ever England's had, and which now has not a fraction of the hope left to it that England's has. It is significant that Scotland's national income has been reduced by half in the last ten years. Whatever form of government may succeed the present, only a wanton disregard of fact can allow denial that Scotland's case demands separate attention from England's.

The enthusiasm and intensity with which Scotland embraced industrialism was akin to that with which she had embraced Calvinism, and was responsible for a like misery. The slums it created in Glasgow and Dundee were supreme in an age of slums; perhaps nowhere in the annals of civilization did filth and wretchedness live so close to prosperity as they did in nineteenth-century Glasgow; where people stored their offal in the streets to sell as manure; where disease was rampant and half the children died before they were five. And still those slums are a reeking disgrace: Scotland's over-

crowding and malnutrition out of all proportion to England's.<sup>1</sup> Yet now that efforts are being made to clear the slums, they are being made on the assumption that employment commensurate to her population will return to the overgrown city, and a fine opportunity for anticipating the inevitable decentralization is being missed. Glasgow's was a bubble growth, and you cannot rebuild a bubble. But unfortunately a long time must elapse after a policy is discredited before its momentum is finished; and the policy of centralization, after the spiritual inflation given it by Mr. Wells with his dream cities, is only now being discredited—largely by war-panic, which is not the kind of debunking most conducive to constructive replacement. But to departmentalize my survey let me, since I have broached the subject, make a start with housing.

Apart from the folly of clearing slums in such a manner as to recreate the congestion the clearance should have gone towards alleviating, there is scant effort at planning, which alone could mitigate the evils arising from the belief that communities can be created by building a lot of houses and filling them with people. Scotsmen are proud of Edinburgh's New Town, but they do not seem to connect its success with the fact that it was planned. Although, indeed, the rebuilding of Princes Street might have provided the necessary lesson, with its statuette-sprouting Gothic mingled with extraordinary attempts at functional façades. Indeed, it is as hard to believe that Scotland is the country of Charles Rennie Mackintosh as it is to believe that it is that of Sir Patrick Geddes. Even although, as study of our sadly neglected architecture will show, Mackintosh was essentially of the Scottish tradition, he was ignored in his own country, and we have had no considerable architect since—save Lorimer, who was primarily a traditionalist in the other sense.

<sup>1</sup> A Mr. Cornelius who recently paid his first visit to our country in order to stand for Parliament, tried to win the confidence of his constituents by telling them that the infant mortality rate was now down to fifty-seven in the thousand. His figures, of course, were the English figures. In Scotland the rate is 76·8. In Greenock, whose government representative Mr. Cornelius hoped to become, it stands at 92.

But let us, before continuing what must perforce be largely an indictment, salute those authorities and individuals responsible for good work. Edinburgh deserves some commendation for the servicable stone blocks of flats with which she has replaced slums in the centre of the city, although she has sinned lavishly in other directions,<sup>1</sup> and it is only due to the taste and patriotism of the Marquess of Bute that Acheson House and Lamb's House in Leith have not suffered the same fate as much more that was beautiful, historical, and of value to the near-dead culture of Scotland. Aberdeenshire will reap her merited reward for building her council houses of native granite instead of imported brick. Various individuals and societies are now vociferous over a neglect of our architectural heritage that painfully reflects the state of our nationhood.<sup>2</sup>

The practice of huddling people together is even carried into the country districts. There are actually counties where old village communities are, much against the will of the people, being broken up, and their residents shifted from handsome stone cottages to hideous blocks of council houses fringing mining townships. The folly of this scarcely needs comment; but I know of one village boy who is now in a reformatory as a result of his family being transferred from the countryside, with its scope for high spirits, to one of these smart new slums. And that, regrettably, is what these municipal and county council settlements so often are; young slums. The conditions are cramped; the building commonly scamped—so that modern convenience is of minimum service; the woodwork unseasoned; the brick shoddy; within twenty years many of them will be due for demolition; nor are they likely to be replaced until that demolition is long overdue.

<sup>1</sup> It is said that even city officials blush a little at thought of Niddrie Mains—where they dumped ten thousand people without any consideration of social needs. Recently, the deaths of two children in this area were attributed to the fact that there is not one doctor in the whole district; while the help of social-workers has been sought to allay the misery of sordid unplanned acres.

<sup>2</sup> After the failure to get government help in the matter, the National Trust for Scotland has issued an appeal for funds to preserve and restore for use fine old houses throughout the country.

It is difficult to reconcile oneself to brick in Scotland even although harled.<sup>1</sup> The architectural conventions are foreign; the standard cavity-walls are not suited to our climate. Moreover, the land abounds in beautiful stones. In the Lothians, for example, between and beyond the slagheaps, there are still lovely villages, with houses native to the landscape, built of red, yellow, white, and grey sandstones, roofed with red pantiles or small slates. Yet in most of these villages there are cottages with fine thick stone walls standing empty, condemned, while the beauty of the village is marred by the hideous brick boxes replacing them, standing at random on its margins. There is no denying that a great many of these cottages might be saved; no denying that they provide in every way a national asset where their successors provide only polite squalor. The value of a W.C. is vastly overrated when it is set above that of the aesthetic. An ugly house with a bath is less of an asset than a beautiful house without one. The ideal of combining the two would seem almost to be regarded as unattainable. One reason for the wanton destruction of old property is that, except in the case of the residences of agricultural workers, grants obtainable for the building of new houses are not given for the renovation of old—even where to do so may be more economical, so promoting the erection of these rows of rotten villas, ill-designed brickwork at enmity with the landscape. Another drawback is provided by the present state of the building industry. The average contractor (and, even if he has not got the surveyor in his pocket, it is increasingly difficult to dispense with a contractor) will put every difficulty in the way of reconstruction, which demands an intelligence and craftsmanship unnecessary for the production of the new brick boxes he is so ready to erect. The local contractor tends to dispense with outside labour, and to employ in place of craftsmen, his own semi-skilled labourers;

<sup>1</sup> By far the best work in harled brick in Scotland (as far, at least, as low-priced houses are concerned) is that done by Mr. Joseph Weekes for Dumbarton County Council. Mr. Weekes, having paid attention to the older traditions of Scottish domestic architecture, has produced work that cannot be compared with the standard council schemes.

promoting bad workmanship and ousting the decent craftsman. There is already a shortage of skilled building-labour, and it is likely to become acute. For, while a good craftsman is one whose chief interest lies in his work, a good contractor is all too probably a bad craftsman who goes elsewhere for his interest and finds it in the mental asylum of a large bank balance. Small wonder that good craftsmanship is in a decline, with the jack-of-all-trades turned master of the situation.

In the decay of the crafts we come to a matter which unless remedied must successfully defeat any effort at the restoration of the rural community on a sound basis. The Government scheme for the preservation of rural crafts, instituted a few years ago in England and at last (although in a somewhat emaciated form) extended to Scotland, deserves notice and support. An investigator found the average age of the smiths in a representative Lowland area to be sixty. From which we may conclude that, at the present rate, within ten years hardly any farmers will be able to get their horses shod. By the Government scheme, the smith is to have such instruction as will widen the field of his activities, both in the way of technical work, as oxy-acetylene welding, and craftsmanship, as wrought ironwork. Thus he may be enabled to continue in business, and the farmer have the added advantage of having a skilled technician at hand. It will also, to some degree, recreate the craft of iron-working, and make available ornamental gates and the like. The scheme is extended to such things as saddlery and leatherwork, and hand-weaving.

But at the same time there are trades outside any such scheme whose continued existence is important to the ideal of reasonably self-contained communities, and which, under existing legislation, are in a state of collapse. Recently the Government authorized the importation of foreign labour by London tailoring concerns, on the ground that they were no longer able to enlist their employees from Britain. The explanation of this lies in regulations supported by the Minister of Labour and betraying the short-sightedness that

we have come to expect from a legislative situated in the one place that benefits from centralization, regulations creating a standard wage for tailors' assistants. The countryman's cost of living is considerably less than that of the Londoner, and there is no reasonable argument in defence of such a regulation. Its result is that, whereas in the past the London shops were fed from the country parts, the London tailor has now cornered the business to such an extent that there are no qualified men available, and the country tailors are in a wretched state, unable to give anything like the employment they once gave, and powerless to compete with those disgusting mass-production institutions with their empty talk of *taste* and *quality* and *the season's colourings*.

In most trades there are parallel cases. One cannot believe, for instance, that the Scottish masons would have jeopardized their own craft by an uneconomically high wage standard, if this had not been adjusted by a predominating southern section of the trade to whom a restricted market made high wages an asset. To a less extent Glasgow and Edinburgh act as detracting magnets; but for the most part Scotland suffers from a 'centre' lying outside the country altogether. The late Sir Godfrey Collins and Dr. Burgin in their denials that there had been any drift of industry to the south have been given the lie by the *Ministry of Labour Gazette* publishing figures showing a marked southern drift in a dozen vital industries.<sup>1</sup>

Turning to agriculture, we may claim that this is proportionately a more important concern for the Scot than for the Englishman; for, although, unlike England's, Scotland's countryside is suffering from an absolute decline in population, it still represents a higher percentage of the total. But Scottish farming has been shamefully neglected in late years. The two most important measures for the revival of agriculture have been the wheat and beet subsidies; of the former Scotland's share represents about one-twentieth of the whole; of

<sup>1</sup> When Mr. Walter Elliot was recently made Secretary of State for Scotland, he was alternatively sympathized with by the English Press as having been too hardly treated—put in disgrace; and sneered at as having been put in a place where he could do no harm!



the latter one-fortieth. They are English crops. The important Scottish crops have received no like attention, despite continuous appeals for increased protection for barley and for an oats subsidy. The 1935 barley acreage was the lowest on record, and even so proved so uneconomical that the decline is expected to continue. The acreage in 1935 was 76,000, in 1934 it was 96,000: fifty years ago it was 250,000. The chief fault of home-grown barley is not that it is inferior, but that it has a later harvest than imported barley; so that adequate protection is justified.

Scottish arable land generally shows the same decrease. The full significance of this decline may be overlooked, although it is visible in fields all over the country; fields that were once fine and weedless that are now rank and dirty, providing poor fodder for livestock. The Scottish farmer is most renowned for his fat cattle, but British interests in the Argentine safeguard its exports. When an agreement was reached as to the quantity of beef to be imported from that country, it was met by sending boneless meat—reducing the weight (and the quality) while increasing the quantity.

To take only one more case showing the, very understandable, discrimination exercised between English and Scottish interests; this year the potato quota was dropped after it had helped the English farmer and just when it was of use to the Scottish, although even the dumbest of Scottish Parliamentary livestock raised its voice in official protest.

Altogether, the decay in farming, the life-blood of the countryside, is bitterly discouraging. Valuable land goes back, wasting the labour of generations of farmers. The farmer is disheartened by the state of the markets; he reduces the number of his employees. The weeds spread and the rabbits multiply. The population declines.

Even so, the state of the fisheries presents a still gloomier picture. They are increasingly exploited by large, highly-capitalized commercial combines, whose trawlers destroy spawning beds in the inshore waters, steal the fish from the sea lochs, maintain an 'economic' price by destroying

thousands of tons of catches, and generally waste the bounty of the sea. As far as one can see, this greedy and disastrous destruction is to continue until nearly all our native fishermen are ruined.

The sea that impoverishes the coastward lands of the Highlands and Islands offered recompense in fish at the native's door. It would seem that, if peoples had any rights the Highlanders had a first claim to these fish. Yet to-day many Highlanders cannot catch enough for themselves, let alone to supplement their small incomes. For under this régime of centralization none of us can be certain of territorial rights—unless it be the suburban in his garden.

Unless the Minch, the Moray Firth, and the Clyde waters are closed to trawlers, determined measures taken with poachers, and the whole industry put upon a sound basis of control, one more Scottish amenity will be sacrificed to the memory of Adam Smith. Other countries can appreciate the value of fisheries. To the west, Ireland has begun to create a fishing industry. To the east, Norway jealously watches over the rights of her fishermen. Recently three large fiords, comparable to those waters that the Scottish inshore fishermen wish to see protected, were closed to trawlers by the Norwegian Government. The following is a quotation from the speech in favour of this motion made by Hr. Koht, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The special social forms of the fishing industry which have developed in Norway; the co-operation and the collective economic interests, which in a special degree have given our fisheries a character of economic democracy, on a broad basis, could not be consistent with steam trawl fishing, which necessarily would require always bigger ships and more capital. For the fishermen of Northern Norway, who are the poorest of the Norwegian people, fishing by cheap means is a necessity, a form of fishing which gives every man the feeling of a free and independent existence and which gives every one his chance and every possible latitude for personal daring and able seamanship.

In the northernmost part of our country some ninety per cent of the people are economically dependent upon the fisheries. The industrializing of the fishing, and, as a consequence, its monopolizing by strong capitalistic societies, would be a social catastrophe. Furthermore, trawling in Norwegian waters would mean the destruction of the home fisheries.

At an early date the Norwegians were aware of the fact that the use and the development of trawling would mean the destruction of the stock fish on the old fishing grounds unless effective protective measures were internationally adopted. Not only does the trawl kill the young fish and destroy all possibility of the rational renewal of the stock, but it breaks up the bottom of the sea, changes the nature of the banks and destroys the spawning places and may thus essentially alter the rules for the migration of the fish. As a consequence of these circumstances, the old North Sea fisheries are a thing of the past. The fisheries off the coast of Scotland are ruined: the trawlers go farther and farther, and whilst only twenty-five years ago it was still an exception to see a foreign trawler off the coast of Northern Norway, there are now every year hundreds of English, German, and French trawlers, and sometimes also of other nationalities.<sup>1</sup>

If we might expect such consideration as this from the Westminster Government (in place of so feeble a palliative as the Herring Board), the Highland problem would be on the road to solution. The standard of life of 'the poorest of the Norwegian people' is a far higher one than that prevailing in the Highlands. In Northern Norway there are modern comforts, electric light; a society with a well-balanced social life. In the Highlands, which comprise half the area of Scotland and nearly one-fifth of that of Britain, there is desperate decay.

The average crofter requires a supplementary income to that obtainable from his croft. Along much of the coast the fishing no longer fulfils that need. The tweed industry is in a poor way (the 'Harris Tweed' mark has benefited the Stornoway mills at the expense of the home-weavers). The long neglect of this remotest part of Britain's countryside has prevented the natural development of new occupations. And meanwhile agriculture has slumped. In many areas the majority of crofters are dependent upon pensions, casual labour, and remittances from relatives abroad; scarcely an existence calculated to maintain a satisfactory state of society.

At the moment vested interests hope to make capital out of the Highlander's distress, in taking his last remaining asset, the water-power, for big industrial purposes: flooding good

<sup>1</sup> This speech is quoted from an article by Mr. J. Lorne Campbell, of Barra, who, as secretary of the Sea League, has done much to point out the folly of the present fisheries policy of Britain.

land, and repeating the slums of Kinlochleven. This same water, harnessed as on the Continent, alternatively proffers local power supplies for many crofters and for such industries as could most certainly be developed amongst them.<sup>1</sup>

The under-nourishment, the despair, the poverty of the rapidly declining Highland population illustrates a vicious flaw in the British conception of civilization. It is not that the Government has made no effort to check the decay; through the Department of Agriculture for Scotland much land has been acquired and various schemes inaugurated. Unfortunately, the decay has gone too far, and the preponderance of industrial interests in Britain antipathetic to the interests of the peasant has frustrated all such endeavours to check it. The Highlands can now only be saved by a comprehensive scheme of development, and a willingness to spend money not in parsimonious dribblets but with some little of the breadth of mind shown towards armaments and sugar-beet. Large-scale re-afforestation would materially improve the soil. The cultivation of early vegetables, and of raspberries (for local canning), have been shown to be practicable on an extensive scale; similar developments only require investigation. There should be co-operative marketing and purchasing, combined with long-overdue improvement in transport, both road and sea. The tourist traffic should be highly developed and made of real benefit to the Highlander. Likewise, the Highland fisheries should be operated for the benefit of the native people.

It would be absurd to pretend that there are not many difficulties to be overcome if such a course of development is to be instituted; it is equally absurd to pretend that the Highlands can be saved from dereliction without such development. Mr. Hugh Quigley, *A Plan for the Highlands* (Methuen, 1s.), has

<sup>1</sup> Any person who may suppose that the proposed Caledonian Power Scheme is calculated to reinvigorate Highland life, is recommended to study the pamphlet on *Scottish Water Power* written by Mr. P. Thomson, of Edinburgh. The scheme, which is ruinous to all amenities, would represent a saving of a fraction of one per cent of Scotland's coal output. It has been repeatedly pointed out by competent authorities that Scotland does not offer facilities for large-scale hydro-electric plants.

suggested that it should be carried out under a Board organized on lines akin to those of the Tennessee Valley Authority, and it is to be hoped that his suggestions may receive early consideration, for the gravity of the Highland situation cannot be over-estimated.

There is perhaps little need to say, in conclusion, that the present trend of events in Scotland is depressing. Nor have we any immediate hopes of seeing an improvement in our affairs. The light industries that our Development Board continually tries to attract are not likely to come to a country from which capital has been withdrawn. Our farming and fisheries need radical reconsideration. As a war base Scotland offers certain advantages, and rearmament has temporarily lowered our unemployment; but it is difficult to feel enthusiastic on that count.

Our ultimate hope is a resurgence of national feeling. We have not at present the genuine feeling for our country that the English have; we do not really believe in her, have little concept of her as having a future. We do not, as the Englishman, see our land as a domicile to be cherished, but are too well content if outsiders will admire the recognized beauty-spots. Scotland really connotes little more than a picture-postcard of a glen to many Scots, whereas Englishmen know something of their own land and history, not in terms of religious disputes, but as a pervading background. We too have got to see our country as an entity, and, whatever political mechanism may be necessary for its realization, and whatever sacrifice of personally cherished notions may be entailed, we must seek the ideal of a Scotland maintaining a healthy community. The Scottish influence on English politics has not, in fact, been predominantly beneficial, and the true Englishman would probably welcome a revision of the terms of Union, putting it on a federal basis; decentralizing, in fact. That, of course, would only be a beginning to any possible solution of our grave difficulties. I, personally, believe it to be a necessary beginning because events make it increasingly plain that Scotland needs a comprehensive plan of reorganization

on the basis that the country is a whole, not so many factors strapped to a distant government by various thongs of trade interest. I believe that town and land need a government in their midst that will put their interests on a basis of mutual support instead of on one of conflict. Our agriculture and fisheries, becoming more important to our national life, would not then be smothered by the uneasy industrialism for whose maintenance so much futile sacrifice is made. We should be forced to consider the Highland area and to create a self-supporting and happy community there. Not least, I believe that our now debased culture might revive if we were in a position to offer our young men the scope that is now denied them in their own country.

# *Lessons from Other Countries*

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LORD HOWARD OF PENRITH

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## I

SOME months ago Mr. Clough Williams-Ellis asked me to contribute to this symposium on the subject of the Preservation of Rural England. I replied that though it is to me a subject of paramount importance, especially the protection of my own part of our country, Lakeland, I had spent so much of my life abroad that I was only now beginning to learn something about the subject as regards England itself. I would, however, if desired, endeavour to give some idea of what had been and was being done in the three European countries, among those where I had served diplomatically, which had struck me as having given most care and attention to the organized protection of rural amenities. The three countries prominent in this respect are Switzerland, Germany, and Sweden.

I have long held that the realization of the importance in national life of protecting national beauty-spots or places of historic interest is something that must for most of us be learnt in childhood. It is really a matter of education. The child must be taught not to waste, denature, or destroy these precious assets of national well-being.

The three nations above mentioned are conspicuous for the thoroughness of their elementary and higher educational systems, and the subject of protecting the beauties of nature and places of historic interest is one that has not been neglected. In the simple duty of not spoiling or defiling beauty-spots by leaving behind unpleasant traces of a pleasant meal in the shape of paper, cigarette-ends, and empty cardboard boxes, not to mention bottles, Swiss, German, and Swedish children must have been carefully instructed both in

the school and home for it is a rare experience to come across such traces of picnics as we constantly find on the shores of our lakes and tarns in Lakeland or in the neighbourhood of our waterfalls or even on the tops of our fells.

It is unnecessary to go further into this side of the question which may appear to some to be trivial. It is, however, really of the greatest importance because the child being father of the man if the child but learns to appreciate beauty as a national asset and to care for and protect it he will insist on others doing likewise. There will then grow up, as there has in these countries so far as my experience goes, a general interest in the whole subject which has been almost entirely lacking among the public in English-speaking countries up to quite recent times.

That education in the value of rural amenities for their protection against the vandalism of the uneducated is really the crux of the whole matter, is, paradoxically enough, confirmed in a way by the fact that in a country like Switzerland, where appreciation of the beauties of the country exists in so high a degree, I have come across but one Federal Law on this question of rural preservation. This is the law of the 11th October 1902 concerning supreme control by the Federation over the Forest Police.

Many people might deduce from this that the opposite is the case. This is however not so, for any person who is even casually acquainted with the conditions of life in Switzerland must have been struck by the care that is taken certainly in the German and French Cantons of all outdoor and natural objects of interest. I infer from this that the absence of Federal as opposed to Cantonal laws on the subject is due mainly to two causes. The first of these is the fact that the population is, as a result of education, so alive to the damage that can be done by acts of vandalism against the beauties of nature that a strict watch is kept by the inhabitants of different cantons to prevent anything of the kind occurring in their own districts.

The second is that just for this reason it has not been found necessary to take the control of these matters out of the hands



of the Cantonal Governments and place it in those of the Confederation.

It may even be said with justice that the Forest Law of 1902 really does not aim at preserving the *amenities* of the countryside but only at protecting existing woods and forests in a strictly utilitarian sense. Yet in this case the two, utilitarian and (if I may be allowed to coin a word lacking in our language) amentarian, considerations generally coincide, and I feel convinced that in Switzerland, if the former conflicted seriously with the latter, both would be carefully weighed and the scales would not by any means necessarily go down on the side of utilitarianism.

In order then to obtain a more comprehensive view of public activity for the preservation of rural amenities in Switzerland it is necessary rather to study the annual reports of the *Schweizer Bund für Naturschutz* (Swiss Association for the Protection of Nature) which has its seat in Bâle.

As the result of the efforts of this association a National Park was created by Federal Decree in the Lower Engadine as early as 3rd April 1914 and placed directly under the control of the Federal Council. In this respect, therefore, it may be said that Switzerland is definitely in advance of Great Britain. If indeed we have had large tracts of land such as the New Forest and the Forest of Dean under Government control for many years past, this was simply because these were originally Crown Lands and had passed from the direct control of the Crown to that of Parliament, the aim of whose administration has been strictly utilitarian. It is time that we followed the example of the United States, Germany, Switzerland, and Sweden in setting up Government National Parks, both as holiday resorts for our congested populations, and as places for the preservation of our all too rapidly disappearing fauna and flora. For this latter purpose numberless keepers are employed in the Swiss National Parks of the Lower Engadine and the Aletsch Valley, for the protection of all the four-footed and feathered inhabitants is a special feature of the Federal or Cantonal Parks as well as of numerous minor

sanctuaries which have increased and multiplied wonderfully during the past few years. But they are not yet nearly sufficient to satisfy the nature lovers, and Professor Badous of Zurich writes in the *Schweizer Naturschutz* quarterly for February 1935 that they are neither numerous nor of great extent, excepting the two Federal Parks above mentioned. Through all the quarterly reviews we find lamentations that the Federal Government does not move fast enough, and it is frequently pointed out that in allowing the natural beauties of Switzerland to be spoilt and disappear the authorities are throwing away a large part of the natural wealth of the country.

It would be easy to quote innumerable and very instructive passages in this sense and it is clear from them that public opinion is much more alive in Switzerland than in our country to the actual remunerative value of preserving the beauties of nature.

Despite such lamentations the Report of the Society for March 1936 was able to chronicle certain definite victories as regards the protection and preservation of well-known beauty-spots. Above all may be noted the Order of the Federal Council of 26th April 1936 respecting the proposed reduction of the famous waterfalls of the Rhine at Schaffhausen from which it was intended to take more water for power purposes.

The Federal Council therein declared that no further damage was to be done to the essential beauty of the falls by the construction of new hydraulic works and that the eventual adaptation of the river to navigation was not to be carried out at the expense of the natural beauties of this scene.

When it is remembered that the horse-power passing over the rocks at Schaffhausen must run into millions and that this power is of vast importance to a country which possesses no coal, it is clear that public opinion must be strongly in favour of the protection of amenities in that country.

From such actions on the part of the Federal Government—and various other, though less conspicuous, instances might be cited—we may infer that public opinion has been very thoroughly instructed and is fully alive to the value, both

moral and material, of untarnished natural beauty in this mechanized age.

This it seems is the happy result of the systematic teaching of children in the public schools from their earliest years onwards. Such education depends much less on actual school books used in school hours than on a real interest in these subjects taken by the teachers themselves who can only so pass on their own civilized outlook to their pupils.

Has this part of the education of our teachers been neglected in our country? Frankly I cannot pretend to say, but I confess it seems to me, considering the utter lack of importance which local authorities too often attach to questions of this character, that this must surely have been the case in the past.

## II

### GERMAN LEGISLATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF BEAUTIES OF LANDSCAPE AND PLACES AND OBJECTS OF HISTORIC INTEREST

Germany like Switzerland has long been noted for the care taken by her people of natural beauties and places and objects of historic interest. All over Germany as in Switzerland this reverence has for generations formed part of the education of the young and has become a second nature.

In Germany, however, as in Switzerland there seems to have been till recently comparatively little national legislation of much general importance having for its aim the combating of the modern tendency to destroy or deface beauties of nature or of art that have come down to us from our ancestors. The instinct to preserve these precious possessions seems to be, so to speak, in the blood.

Recently, however, the necessity has clearly been felt of taking some more drastic and vigorous protective action. The immediate result has been the Law of 26th June 1935 for protecting the natural beauties of the Reich (*Reichsnaturschutzgesetz*) which is probably the most thorough-going measure of the kind ever enacted by any government.

This Law was passed by the National Socialist Government on the 26th June 1935 and is signed by the Führer and Chancellor of the Realm Adolph Hitler, and countersigned by General Goering in his capacity as Reichsforstmeister (Minister of the Department of Woods and Forests of the Reich) the Ministers of Justice, of Agriculture, of the Interior as well as of Science and Education as heads of departments all of which are interested in the subject-matter of this Law.

The introductory sentences of the Law are both characteristic and essentially true.

To-day as formerly Nature in Wood and Field is the object of the desire, the joy, and the recreation of the German people.

The landscape of the countryside has however been completely changed in these latter years, its garb of trees and flowers owing to intensive agriculture and afforestation, to narrow minded cleaning up of meadows and to the cultivation of conifers has been in many places completely altered. Many species of animals which inhabited wood and field have disappeared with the disappearance of their natural haunts.

While such developments were often an economic necessity, we are to-day conscious of the ideal as well as of the economic damage wrought by such mass transformation.

The protection of objects of natural interest (*Naturdenkmalspflege*) which has been growing for centuries could be carried out with but partial success, because the necessary political and cultural conditions were lacking. It was only the transformation of the German man which created the preliminary conditions necessary for an effective system of protection of Natural Beauty.

The Government of the German Realm considering it to be its duty to preserve for the poorest members of the people their share in the natural beauties of the German scene has therefore decided to enact the following Law for the protection of natural beauties which is hereby made public.

Whatever we may think or feel about Nazi political philosophy all must I think acknowledge that in this introduction to a Law, which I hope will in many things become a model for the rest of the world, its draughtsmen have expressed a deeply felt sense of the beauties of their country and of the necessity of preserving these for the 'desire, the joy, and recreation' of future generations. We who share their views in this matter can at least applaud the effectiveness of the measures they are taking to attain their laudable object.

It is to be feared, however, that we are still far from the

time when a British Government will introduce a Bill on similar lines to satisfy 'the desires, the joys, and the recreation' of British subjects.

## PART I<sup>1</sup>

### Section 1.

The aim of the protection of Nature (*Naturschutz*) is here defined as the preservation of and care for natural objects of every kind and this Law deals with the protection of:

(a) Trees, plants, and animals which are not classed as game.

(b) Natural monuments and their surroundings.

(c) Areas specially protected (Sanctuaries).

(d) Other areas in the open country the maintenance of which is in the public interest on account of rarity, beauty, or peculiarity or for reasons of scientific, national, forestry or sporting interest.

### Section 2.

This Section defines the protection of trees and plants and of non-game animals to mean the preservation of rare sorts or threatened species and the prevention of abusive exploitation for profit of plants or animals or other living creatures, such as, e.g. butterflies used for ornament, etc.

### Section 3.

*Natural Monuments.* These are defined as 'Specialities of Nature' the preservation of which is considered of public interest on account of scientific, historical, or popular interest, such as, e.g. curious rocks, traces of the Ice Age, curious springs of water, waterfalls, ancient and rare trees, etc.

### Section 4.

*Protected Areas.* Protected areas in the sense of this Law are areas set apart for protection in the public interest on account of peculiar natural properties of scientific or other interest.

<sup>1</sup> Not a verbatim translation of the law but a condensation for brevity.

## Section 5.

Other country areas can also be included under the protective action of this Law although they may not correspond to the definitions laid down in sections 3 and 4 but yet contribute to the beauty of the countryside and are of importance to the animal world, especially as regards singing birds, special trees, the maintenance of parks, burial grounds, etc.

## Section 6.

*Limitations.* The *status quo* of areas which are required either altogether or in a preponderating degree for military purposes, for important roads, railroads, or lines of communication, canals or water transport is not to be prejudiced for the sake of landscape preservation.

## PART II

*Authorities entrusted with the execution of this Law*

## Section 7.

At the head of these stands the *Reichsforstmeister*, the chief of the Department of Woods and Forests (who is at present General Goering). Under him are the Administrative Authorities of each district.

The *Reichsforstmeister* will take measures for the execution of this Law in agreement with the heads of other Government departments whenever and in so far as such measures deal with matters within the competence of such other departments.

The *Reichsforstmeister* has also to decide in accord with the Principal Provincial Authorities, which authorities are to be considered as 'higher' and 'lower' authorities for the purpose of this Act.

## Section 8.

(1) Boards (*Stellen*) for the protection of Natural Amenities (*Naturschutzstellen*). This section lays down the:

(a) Qualifications for membership of such boards, e.g. powers of inquiry, scientific research, natural observation, and oversight of the districts defined in Section 1.

(b) Establishment of measures for the security of natural monuments.

(c) The education of public opinion in regard to the necessity of protecting the beauties of Nature.

(2) The National Board for the protection of Natural Amenities (*Naturschutz*) consists of the highest authorities in all matters of *Naturschutz* and has to see to uniformity of action among other secondary boards, and also to protect German interests in international questions of this kind.

#### Section 9.

The National Board is directly under the highest authority for protection of Natural Amenities (*Naturschutz*). Remaining boards are placed under the control of the next highest authority in the hierarchy of '*Naturschutz*.'

#### Section 10.

This section deals with the establishment of a special Court for *Naturschutz* to be convoked by the highest *Naturschutz* authority.

### PART III

#### *Protection of Plants, Trees, and Animals*

#### Section 11.

The highest '*Naturschutz*' authority can issue regulations in accordance with Section 2 for the whole or for a part of the Realm. These regulations will be universally applied to every one in the country without exception and measures for their enforcement will depend on the different '*Naturschutz*' authorities above mentioned.

### PART IV

#### *Natural Monuments and Protected Areas*

#### Section 12.

(1) The subordinate '*Naturschutz*' authorities must keep an official register (called the Book of Natural Monuments) of Natural Monuments, and registration in these registers is sufficient to ensure protection under this Law.

(2) Pending the enforcement of Section 18 such official registers can be drawn up by the highest '*Naturschutz*' authorities and registry therein with attached topographical charts will ensure protection of the places in question.

### Section 13.

#### *Method of registration.*

The registration of a Natural Monument and, where required, of a surrounding area necessary for its protection will be carried out by a subordinate '*Naturschutz*' authority on the proposal of the competent '*Naturschutz*' board. The registration of a protected area will be effected by the National *Naturschutz* authority on the proposal of or after hearing evidence of the National *Naturschutz* Board.

### Section 14.

#### *Cancellation of registration.*

Cancellation of registration of Natural Monuments or of *Naturschutz* areas can take place on the proposal of the respective competent authorities.

### Section 15.

#### *Measures for protection and preservation.*

(1) Special measures with this object will be taken by the competent local authorities in each separate case for Natural Monuments. In the case of protected areas regulations will be drawn up separately for each area by the highest *Naturschutz* authorities or by the higher authorities *only* with the consent of the highest authority.

(2) Necessary measures for protection and preservation of registered natural monuments or protected areas must be patiently accepted by landowners and all others who possess any legal right connected with such monuments or areas. The execution of these measures of protection must, if necessary, be carried out by the police. The owner or other interested party may undertake to carry out at his own expense the measures of protection, etc., which have been decided on.



(3) This paragraph deals with claims brought by third parties.

#### Section 16.

##### *Prohibition of alterations.*

A registered Natural Monument may not be removed, destroyed, or altered except with the consent of the competent authority. The same holds good of protected areas.

#### Section 17.

##### *Examinations and temporary repairs.*

Admission must be granted to the competent authorities and their representatives to examine and report on the condition and maintenance of registered monuments and areas and this admission may if necessary be effected with the help of the police.

A competent authority may with the object of giving temporary security to a Natural Monument or protected area forbid, or if necessary prevent, the commencement or further execution of alterations or of the removal thereof.

#### Section 18.

##### *National protected areas.*

(1) Authorizes the *Reichsforstmeister*, acting in accord with the heads of interested departments to proclaim certain areas as National Protected Areas.

(2) Authorizes the taking over from owners of any land which is surrounded by Government protected areas or borders on them if this is necessary for the purposes of *Naturschutz*.

(3) In order to arrange for re-settlement of inhabitants rendered necessary by the provisions of paragraph (2) a special National Board will be set up in the National Ministry for Woods and Forests. The chairman of this board will be appointed and can be removed by the *Reichsforstmeister* acting together with the Minister of Agriculture.

(4) Deals with the procedure to be observed in case of property being taken over from the owners as mentioned above.

## PART V

*Care for Country Scenery*

## Section 19.

Regulations for the protection of scenery in country areas will be drawn up by the highest, and, with their consent, by the secondary and the lower *Naturschutz* authorities. Such regulations can affect the scenery of the countryside in so far as concerns the prevention of changes likely to damage or to bring about prejudicial alterations therein.

## Section 20.

Notification to the competent *Naturschutz* authorities must be given in good time by all national, provincial,<sup>1</sup> and communal authorities of any substantial alterations in the countryside.

## PART VI

*Regulations regarding Penalties*

These regulations are of less importance for the purpose of this summary of the '*Naturschutzgesetz*' and it will suffice to say that breaches of the Law are punishable in the most serious cases with up to three years' imprisonment (*Gefängnis*) or in other cases with fines up 150 marks and arrest (*Haft*).

## PART VII

This part deals with concluding and transitional regulations.

Most readers of the above Law will probably agree that no such drastic legislation for the preservation and protection of the beauties and amenities of the countryside has probably ever before been enacted in any country. To us English who love to go slowly in regard to legislative changes many parts may well seem to be too drastic for home consumption.

Nevertheless there are certain innovations which I at least feel to be well worthy of imitation by our legislators.

<sup>1</sup> '*Staatsbehörden*' as opposed to '*Reichsbehörden*' is translated throughout as 'Provincial Authorities' as being more intelligible to the ordinary English reader who is unacquainted with the present German system of local divisions of the Administration than the words 'States Authorities' might be.

Among these I would particularly draw attention to the establishment of some higher National Commission or even separate Government Office to control the continual harm that is being done to our countryside and national or natural monuments by carelessness and ignorance, not to mention deliberate and wilful destruction and mutilation for the sake of profit.

There is one other point which, after what has been written about Switzerland, need hardly be laboured here, and this is the paragraph dealing with the boards set up for the protection of natural amenities. This is to be found in paragraph (c) of Section 8 of Part II, which declares that one of the duties of the boards must be '*the education of public opinion in regard to the necessity of protecting the beauties of Nature.*'

The description of this most important Law has taken up so much of my available space that I cannot give up any more to a summary of the regulations for its execution. Those sufficiently interested must be referred to the text of the *Verordnung* or general order itself, dated April 1936.

### III

#### SWEDISH LEGISLATION FOR PROTECTION OF AREAS, PLACES, AND OBJECTS OF NATIONAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST

This follows, as might be expected, very closely along German or rather (because there was no Imperial, but only State legislation of this kind before the National Socialist régime) along Prussian lines.

We find <sup>1</sup> that as early as 1906 the Prussian Minister for Education (*Kulturministerium*) set up a central authority for the protection of natural amenities and places of interest (*Naturschutz*) in the form of a State Board or Commission (*Staatliche Stelle für Naturdenkmalpflege*) which rapidly developed into a truly great department whose archives and library (to give one example of its growth) contained some 6,000 volumes. It

<sup>1</sup> See p. 41 of *Naturskydd i Sverige*.

edited two periodicals, one genuinely scientific and the other more popular, and under its auspices a yearly Congress for Nature Protection (*Naturschutz*) was held in Berlin. The Central Board formed sub-committees all over the country for this purpose and at the beginning of 1923 there were no less than forty of these committees which maintained close contact with all local associations of the surrounding district.

The Prussian example was followed by other German States and the local associations in these States frequently worked in close co-operation with the Government Board in Berlin, apparently with most successful results, especially in Bavaria.

National Parks and Sanctuaries for all kinds of wild life began to be set up in different parts of the country but no legislation was at first introduced with this object. In fact it must be admitted that Europe, for various reasons, lagged sadly behind the United States Legislation in this respect which had set up its first great National Park, the Yellowstone Park, as early as 1872, with an area of nearly 1,900,000 hectares (over 4,000,000 acres). Yet Sweden, once started on the right way, augmented her National Parks very rapidly and the Swedish Academy of Science in a pamphlet published in 1932 gives their number as fourteen, together with an immense list of protected natural objects of interest which might range from notable rocks or trees or buildings to places of singular natural beauty.

It was in 1909 that the Swedish Government appears to have taken the first definite step towards direct legislation for Nature protection in a Law which received the Royal Assent on the 25th June of that year and must have given great satisfaction to King Gustav who has always been a fervent lover of Nature, perhaps equally as a sportsman and as an artist.

I shall not attempt to give so long a summary of this enactment as I have of its German parallel of 1935.<sup>1</sup> It is entitled: 'Law respecting the safeguarding of objects of natural interest.' But it is certainly worth our closest attention as being so far

<sup>1</sup> See p. 285.

as I am aware the first example of legislation of this kind, at least by any European State, though I speak under correction.

There is no such rhapsodical introduction to the Swedish Law as to its later German imitator. It leaps in Clause 1 directly *in medias res*.

#### Article 1.

Areas or natural objects which are of special interest for the knowledge of the nature of the country or on account of some remarkable quality must immediately be protected for the future in the manner below stated for the safeguarding of natural objects of interest.

#### Article 2.

If any person desires to obtain protection for any natural area or object in accordance with the intention of Article 1 he must hand in a petition to that effect to the King's Representative in the province in which the said area or object of interest is located.

The petition above mentioned shall contain:

1. Description of the qualities of the object to be protected and its situation.
2. Report as regards the owner of the property together with such persons as have any rights therein.
3. Proposal for regulations as to the safeguarding thereof.
4. Proposal as to the manner of defining the area or object and of the necessary enclosing fences.

There follow various other regulations as to the procedure to be adopted respecting notification to the owner or, in case of the property having changed hands, of objections being raised, etc.

Further articles provide that the King's Representative may, pending a final decision, forbid any action which might injure the place or object to be safeguarded.

If the petition is not supported by the Academy of Science, a report may be demanded by that body, and the petition may not be accepted unless finally so supported.

Article 8 provides for the cancellation of the safeguarding of places or objects in certain circumstances. This cancellation is effected through the Royal Representative.

Article 13 is of special interest. It provides that the Royal Representative may forbid, if necessary, the sticking up of bill-boards, placards, or any other disturbing form of advertisement in any place of special beauty or on the exterior of any building or object of particular beauty or interest.

Breaches of such orders issuing from the proper authorities can be punished by fines ranging from five to one thousand crowns.<sup>1</sup>

Proceeds of fines to which lawbreakers may be sentenced are to be divided as to two-thirds for the Academy of Science and one-third for that of the person denouncing such breaches.

It should be especially observed that in accordance with this law districts may be placed under special protection by Decree of the Governor of the Province after a petition therefor has been passed as ordered by law not only for the preservation of scenery but also for the protection of either fauna or flora or both. A good example of the above is the proclamation of the safeguarding of Södra Hammar on Gotland by Lanshöfding Herman Behm.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear from the above short account of German and Swedish legislation for the protection of scenery as well as for the preservation of fauna and flora that it is far advanced beyond anything we have in this country. There are two points to which particular attention may be drawn.

First, that the final authority in both Germany and Sweden is not allowed to rest in matters of dispute in the hands of local authorities or subordinate Government departments, but is referred to a special department or ministry of the Central Government acting in the case of Sweden directly under the king and Parliament.

Second, that in important cases the higher authority can

<sup>1</sup> *The Swedish Crown*—(nominally) 13. 1½d.

<sup>2</sup> P. 270, *Naturskydd*, by Thor Högdahl, Norstedt & Sons, Stockholm, 1925.

if necessary override even the rights of property in the interests of the nation at large.

There is of course nothing new in permitting lands to be taken over by the Crown for national purposes. What, however, is new to us (a 'novelty' now become an urgent necessity if we are not to see our country denatured beyond all recognition) is that this safeguarding power of the Government should be extended in special cases, when a petition therefor shall have been proved to be well founded, to districts, places, and objects for the purpose of preserving *natural beauty or places of historic or scientific interest*.

Many of our people are apt to argue that such things are not the concern of Government. Yet if they would but learn that especially beautiful scenery or scientifically or historically interesting objects in the landscape such as, let us say, the vales of the Esk and the Duddon in Cumberland, Stonehenge, or one of our great ruined abbeys, have a definite value to the country in the interests of 'tourism,' such philistines may in time perhaps learn to think differently.

There is one other point that seems to me of supreme importance which is nevertheless often overlooked. This is the education of children in these matters. They need to be taught the value of the beautiful and interesting things about them, that they may learn to appreciate them as part of their own prized possessions. Then it will be far more difficult for landowners who are vandals, for local authorities who are just ignorant, or even for Government departments (which are sometimes composed of philistines) to deprive us of such possessions as they have done too often in the past. The mass of the people thus better enlightened, would then rise in angry protest to stop such spoliation of the objects (to quote the German Law of 1935) of their 'desire, joy, and recreation.'

I will therefore conclude by a short account of the work of schools in Sweden in this particular line of education for indeed it seems to be as wellnigh complete as anything can be.

In 1907 a body of experts was called by the Government to

consider this problem and reported amongst other things as follows :

In our schools and educational institutes as also in the primary schools, high schools, etc., the question of the preservation of scenery and all objects of nature should be a subject of lectures and addresses.

The report goes on to underline the value of arousing interest for the protection of these during excursions into the country and instruction in 'the science of building homes.'

'By means of well illustrated scientific books children may learn of the dangers that now threaten our natural heritage on every side and learn also what individuals can do to prevent damage and to preserve at least some parts of our landscape to show future generations what the country originally looked like.'

So we find that in Sweden, the foundations having been laid throughout the country, there are indeed good prospects of far greater care being taken than heretofore to prevent careless disfigurement and destruction.

The programme of education as far back as the year 1919 states among other things that :

especially by means of excursions and also by instruction in the class-room should the teacher never fail to open the eyes of his pupils to all that is beautiful and worthy of remembrance in nature, and urge them to treat natural objects with care, and never damage or destroy but rather strengthen and help wherever that is desirable.

and further :

By means of appropriate examples, children should be reminded of the importance of protecting the natural beauties of our country and of man's duty towards animals. This instruction should be so given as to lead to founding in the hearts of pupils a real love of nature and of respect for life.

Again :

In the interest of the preservation of animal life children should for instance be discouraged from collecting birds' eggs or living creatures, e.g. insects (butterflies). They must be reminded that unnecessary damage should not be done to valuable and protected species of plants while making collections, and to the life of creatures in places where these are specially protected.

Much is continually being done in Swedish Schools in these ways especially by excursions and it is a common sight to see a



band of happy pupils going out in summertime into the woods and to the rocky islands round the coast in special steamers to learn about the fauna and flora of this country and the historical objects of interest in the neighbourhood. It is not therefore remarkable that there should be in Sweden not only a real love of natural things but also a real desire not to spoil by carelessness or untidiness (or even through that simple love of destruction which is perhaps natural to almost all uneducated folk) those common things of life by which we are surrounded which individually perhaps have little value but which, like bracken in the autumn or even that despised weed ragwort, become a feast of colour in the mass. At the same time it must be admitted that there are places where the golden glory of ragwort on a hill-side has to give way to the more prosaic necessities of the farmer. It is just such lessons in the daily life around us which children can so easily pick up during school holidays if these are not entirely devoted to the swings and the roundabouts.

There are many publications produced in Sweden respecting country life in all its phases, not the least interesting among which is the *Tidskrift för Hembygdsvard* (periodical for the care of home building) of which the copy for 1936 is of great interest with its charming descriptions and illustrations of typical cottages.

I should add in conclusion that for the Swedish part of this paper I have made almost exclusive use of an admirable handbook for school and home on *Nature Protection*<sup>1</sup> by Thor Hogdahl, published by Messrs. P. A. Norstedt of Stockholm in 1925. This handbook is well worth studying by all who can read Swedish and are interested in the subject.

<sup>1</sup> *Naturskyd*.

# *Fifty Years Hence*

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AILEEN TATTON BROWN

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*Notes for a Lecture on Territorial Planning to be delivered  
in the year 1987.*

Town Planning first became a recognized problem after the World War, 1914-1918. One is immediately tempted to ask 'Why?' Was it a post-war reaction, epitomized in the phrase 'a land fit for heroes to live in' or was there a more substantial reason for this sudden interest in the subject?

If we consider the Town and Country Planning Act, 1932 (the first Act of any importance), in conjunction with two other Acts of the same period:

- (i) The Restriction of Ribbon Development Act, 1935,
- (ii) The Trunk Roads Act, 1937,

some light is thrown on the question. Both these Acts are concerned with the regulation of transport. We are apt to take the transport system for granted. Our present system works with an ease that appears natural. But we are only entitled to regard it as such if we assume that the manner in which population is distributed in the year 1987 is natural. At this point, with your permission, I will digress for a few minutes. I think that a short summary of the population movements between 1760 and the present day is necessary if you are to understand the nature of the problem which baffled previous generations for many years.

*Outline of Movements of Population 1760-1987 and their causes:*

(1) Before 1760 it is true to say that both population and industry were localized.

Industry was scattered up and down the country wherever water power could be found. The distribution of agricultural population was dictated

by the nature of the land. The distribution of industrial population was dictated by the same local conditions that governed industry, taken in conjunction with the fact that most labourers had to be within walking distance of their work.

The distribution of population and industry was therefore very similar to what it is to-day, although the conditions which governed it were quite different.

(2) The period 1760-1860 saw two important changes in the conditions which governed the distribution of industry and population.

(a) The steam engine was invented. Industry was largely set free from local influences.

(b) The railway train became the chief means of transport. The railway is essentially a system of long-distance transport. The fewer the halts the more efficient the service. Loading and warehouses were provided at infrequent points, determined by already existing centres of population. These points became 'attractive' to industry.

These two inventions between them caused the tremendous concentration of population which formed the early twentieth-century town. Curiously enough, this process was regarded as inevitable. The term 'localization of industry,' already out of date, was invented to explain the phenomena.

(c) The motor-car, which became the commonest means of transport between 1900 and 1940, worked on an entirely different principle. The principle on which the railway works is concentration of traffic and therefore concentration of population. The principle on which the motor-car works is diffusion of transport facilities. The motor requires for efficient working, diffusion of population. A marked tendency was immediately felt in this direction. Liberated by the motor-car, man returned to his natural environment; wherever roads were made, houses were built.

Industry, however, remained indifferent to new development. Three factors contributed to keep industry in the towns, they were:

(1) The theory of localization of industry had such a strong hold on people's minds that nobody even considered the possibility of moving.

(a) The local government system of the period which left the duties of providing roads, sewers, light, and transport and housing largely in the hands of municipal authorities, tended to attract industry to urban areas. Municipalities would not provide services outside their own area.

(3) Force of inertia.

To return to town-planning legislation. The first Town

Planning Act was passed soon after the effects of motor transport began to be felt.

(1) It attempted to prevent the movement of population away from the towns on the ground that 'ribbon development,' as it was then called, spoiled the countryside.

(2) It attempted equally to prevent the erection of tall buildings in the centre of towns. These were being put up at a great rate because traffic congestion, caused by the increasing use of motor-cars, made movement inside towns more, not less difficult.

The effect of both provisions was to drive the working man back to the suburb. What they should have done, of course, was to bring industry out into the country. The corollary to localizing industry was 'localizing ugliness.' The fact that ninety per cent of the population was condemned by this policy to live in ugliness did not appear to town planners to be any concern of theirs. Town Planning was still a science in name. It had no principles, and its traditions were derived from French landscape gardeners of the seventeenth century. Its attitude to industrial problems was the negative attitude of an 'Art.'

*Causes which led to the Reversal of the Policy of the 1932 Town and Country Planning Act*

The Town and Country Planning Act, 1932, remained in operation for the years 1932-42. Its adverse critics by that time felt themselves justified. The Act had, on the whole, worked harmfully, in so far as it had worked at all. The impulse to reconsider town-planning policy did not, however, come from town planners—who still had an academic and restricted view of their responsibilities—but from the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Health. The difficulties in which these departments found themselves under the existing system led to a reconsideration of the whole problem. By 1940 the conception of town planning had undergone a great change; real town planning may be said to have begun with the passing of the Land Utilization Act, 1942, passed at the Recommendation of the First Town-Planning Commission of

1941. This commission was set up as the result of recommendations contained in:

- (i) The Transport Report, 1940.
- (ii) The Report of the Electricity Commissioners, 1939.
- (iii) The Inquiry into the Progress of Rehousing, 1939.

I would like to run quickly through the findings of these three Commissions, as it may give you some idea of the extraordinary state of the country at that time.

*Report of Commission on Regulation of Motor Traffic, 1940*

By 1940 traffic congestion in London had become so bad that early in the year the Minister of Transport, by a regulation, forbade the use of motor-cars within a radius of five miles of Charing Cross. There was great public outcry as a result of which a commission was set up, with wide powers, to investigate the problem of motor traffic in large towns. After sitting for three months, and examining 2,091 witnesses, the commission reported that it could not proceed unless the scope of its inquiry was enlarged. The commission was accordingly reconstituted, with power to report on the co-ordination of all forms of transport throughout the United Kingdom.

The findings of the commission, in so far as they concern us, were:

(i) Ninety per cent of the traffic in large towns was due to the daily migration of individuals to and from work.

(ii) This migration to and from work, resulting as it did in rush periods, was a particularly wasteful and undesirable feature of the system and should if possible be eliminated.

(iii) Zoning, as practised under the 1932 Act, tended to segregate industry in one area and population in another; it therefore maximized this type of traffic.

(iv) Study of rush period traffic showed that on an average individuals in large towns travelled over twenty miles daily to and from their work. The tendency was for individuals to live in the country where possible. Their dispersion over still wider areas was only hindered by the necessity of living near their places of work, which tended to be concentrated together near the centres of towns.

(v) From the point of view of transport authorities, the transport of goods, which could be conveniently handled at any hour of the day or

night, was much less wasteful than transport of individuals. Plant could be used continuously, and peak periods eliminated.

(vi) If the transport system was to be saved from complete breakdown, localization of population was necessary.

(vii) In the view of the commission, localization of population could only be achieved by extensive decentralization of industry.

(viii) A special commission should be set up to see how this could best be effected.

### *The Report of the Electricity Commissioners, 1939*

In 1939 the Electricity Commissioners were asked to make a report on the working of the Grid System.

The process of electrifying the country, which had proceeded with amazing rapidity during the period 1926-36 had made little progress during the last four years. It had been hoped that Great Britain, which was fifty per cent electrified in 1936, would be 100 per cent electrified by 1940. The efficiency of the system depended largely on the universal use of electricity.

The commission reported that:

(i) By 1940, 100 per cent industrial plant used electric power, but domestic consumption had only risen to 20 per cent.

(ii) If domestic and agricultural consumption could be increased to 100 per cent it would more than double the consumption of electricity.

(iii) From the point of view of the efficient working of the industry it was most important to secure increased domestic demand; domestic consumption balanced industrial consumption because the demand occurred when industrial plant was idle.

(iv) Domestic demand had in the past responded slowly because the cost of supplying a rural area, which had no industries to 'balance' the private consumers, was comparatively high. Private individuals were unable or unwilling to bear the burden of a distributing station which was only working half time. The cost of electricity could only be reduced to a level which would make the potential domestic demand effective if industrial undertakings were more evenly distributed throughout the country.

(v) The committee recommended that a commission should be set up to inquire into methods of decentralizing industry.

### *Inquiry into the Progress of Rehousing, 1939*

The commission was set up as the result of a public agitation. 2,000,000 slum dwellers signed a petition, and marched from all over the country in an attempt to present the petition to

Parliament. They were, of course, dispersed by the police, but the demonstration made an impression on public opinion, and as the elections were approaching the Government decided to appoint a committee to report on the matter.

The main points in the report were:

(i) That rehousing was proceeding at a rate which barely kept pace with the need for new houses, leaving a very small margin for slum clearance.

(ii) That local authorities had done everything in their power to solve the problem under existing conditions; circumstances over which they had at present no control made the problem an insoluble one.

These were: (a) The prohibitive cost of land in towns.

(b) The unwillingness of the working classes to live in the country, where land was cheap, because of the difficulty and the expense of getting to and from work.

(iii) That the present system of unregulated use of land led at one and the same time to:

(a) Slums which were the direct result of congestion;

(b) Very high land values which made it impossible to clear the congestion, and in turn caused further congestion. Even the clearance schemes of the last few years, which had cost so much public money and added such great burdens to the rates, were themselves congested.

The committee suggested that a commission be set up to study the question of land utilization. They were in favour of preserving private ownership as far as possible, but they *thought it should be possible to regulate the use of land so that:*

(i) The value of land wherever it was situated should be its 'real' value. They pointed out that the very high price paid for urban land was artificial. The difference in price between agricultural and building land they recognized as healthy. But the very marked difference between building land in rural and urban areas was, in their opinion, merely one of the harmful results of unnecessary congestion in large towns.

(ii) The increase in land value, when land was made available for building purposes by the construction of roads at public expense should benefit the public. Under the existing system it merely resulted in an increase of the rates.

If this were done, they pointed out that the housing problem would cease to exist because:

(a) The congestion which caused the formation of slums would cease.

(b) The houses which still had to be constructed for working-class people at uneconomic rents could be financed from the increase in land values.

*The Town-Planning Commission, 1942*

The Town-Planning Commission was the result of these three reports. The cumulative evidence in favour of decentralization was too strong to be ignored. The particular problem the commission was asked to consider was land utilization, but by this time people were beginning to realize that town-planning problems could not be considered in isolation. The commission was given powers to consider any question it might consider relevant. I have not time, unfortunately, to go through the report with you in detail. The result of their report was the Land Utilization Bill of 1942 which I will deal with briefly.

*Land Utilization Bill, 1942*

The Land Utilization Bill was the second of the great planning measures of the twentieth century: the first was the Electricity Bill of 1926. The Electricity Bill was to a certain extent a model for the Land Utilization Act. There is, however, this great difference between the two Bills. The Electricity Act dealt with a specialized and limited problem; in this way it resembled the legislation of the nineteenth century. The Land Utilization Act is the prototype of twentieth-century legislation; it is the first attempt to *relate* the activities of Government Departments which had previously been considered entirely independent. It dealt with housing, land, and transport. To us it seems obvious that these are interdependent, but it is impossible to understand the history of the period 1900-40 unless we remember that to our grandfathers the connection was not obvious.

The Act of 1942 set up the Land Utilization Board—a body of seven people to be appointed by the Minister of Transport, and responsible to him.

The duty of looking after the Trunk Roads, which had been vested in the Minister of Transport since 1937, was transferred to the new board. In addition they had powers to:



(i) Select new areas for development by the construction of new roads (previously roads had only been constructed, like railways, between existing centres of population).

(ii) Buy up land at agricultural rates, along the line of the proposed new road, to a maximum width of four miles; two miles on either side of the road. (This was financed in the same way as the construction of the grid; by loan at a fixed rate of interest.)

(iii) Lease land for periods not exceeding 100 years to approved companies for purposes of estate development. It was provided in the Act that:

(a) The area of land rented to each company should not be less than two square miles.

(b) That development should conform to conditions laid down by the town-planning commission. (The progress that has been made during the last forty years has been in the framing of these conditions.)

(c) That a registered architect must be employed by the company. The rent of land let for the purpose of development was to be based on the rent of agricultural land in the area. In return for this concession the approved companies were required to provide a fixed proportion of houses at rents within the reach of working-class tenants. Rates were thus relieved of a great burden. Approved companies were given the right to sublet parts of their land to people who wished to build their own houses. Individual building was, however, subject to the same measure of control as company building. It had to form part of a scheme of development drawn up by a registered architect.

The Act also made provisions to secure close co-operation between the Electricity Board and the Land Utilization Board by appointing a member of the Central Electricity Board to act as permanent adviser to the Land Utilization Board. The effect of this scheme was that the supply of services, e.g. roads, light, etc., previously vested in municipalities and therefore tending to concentrate people in towns, were taken from local authorities and given instead to an authority whose interest was to *decentralize* the population. Before the passing of this Act a growing town was a reason for municipal satisfaction.

### *Amendments of 1958*

As I mentioned before, progress since the passing of the 1942 Act has been chiefly a matter of changes made in the conditions which the Town-Planning Authorities were allowed to impose, under the Act (subsection 22), on the development companies.

To begin with, these conditions were optional and rudimentary. There was great fear of imposing unreasonable financial strain on the companies.

By 1955, however, it became clear that the savings which resulted from intelligent use of land exceeded the wildest expectations. These were due to two causes:

(i) Rents which houses in the new areas commanded were far above the normal rents in rural areas. The middle classes, accustomed to paying £300 a year for five bedrooms in a town house, were prepared to pay £200 a year for the new houses in country districts planned so that their inhabitants continued to enjoy the conveniences of urban life. This was eight or nine times the rent commanded by isolated country houses, and left an ample margin of profit for the builder.

(ii) Rates, which in large towns had risen to be as much as half the rent of a house, fell to something nearer their present proportion. The cost of maintaining well-laid out units of manageable size, was, of course, quite small—in comparison with the total house rent of a unit of population, negligible. The public benefited greatly—so did the builder.

Accordingly, the 1958 Amendment was passed. It incorporated in the 1942 Act certain provisions which had previously been left to the discretion of the Town-Planning Authorities. Under the Amendment, it was compulsory for the companies to provide:

(i) Thirty per cent of their area as open space for playing-fields, gardens, etc.

(ii) Adequate space in suitable positions for public buildings, schools, etc.

(iii) To restrict the density of population, taking an average for each two-mile unit, to twenty per acre.

(iv) To have a strip of land 200 yards wide between the roadway and the nearest house (they were permitted, however, to use this strip as either allotments or playing-fields).

I do not feel that it is necessary for me to summarize the results of the Land Utilization Act, 1942. They are before your eyes. It will be sufficient for me to give you a few figures illustrating the magnitude of the changes that have taken place.

(1) London, which had a population of 8,000,000 odd in 1940 has now shrunk to one-eighth its former size, and is still disintegrating. Land values have fallen to a corresponding extent.

(2) In 1942, eighty-five per cent of industry was in urban areas. It is

safe to say that the remaining fourteen per cent was situated in areas which, if not urban, were spoiled. Now ninety-five per cent of industry is in country districts and the electric factories which have been universal since 1942 are clean and attractive.

(3) Traffic congestion is a term we do not understand. For forty-four years our transport system has worked smoothly and easily. Yet in 1935 it took sixty minutes to drive the twenty miles between the Marble Arch and St. Albans. It took three hours to motor across London. In 1940, as I have already mentioned, the use of cars within a five-mile radius of Charing Cross had to be forbidden.

I would like to add a few words, however, on the opportunities these changes give to us; and more particularly on the Planning of Towns Bill, which will, I hope, be passed this year. Some of you may think that the measure scarcely deserves praise, because it is so long overdue. I hope, however, that I have made it clear to you why it is that there has been so much Town Planning and so little planning of towns. Until pressure on the towns had been relieved, it was impossible to undertake constructive planning in urban areas.

Decentralization is now sufficiently advanced for us to consider the replanning of our important towns. The population of London has fallen to one-eighth its former size, and a corresponding amount of land has been set free. The new Act will reconstitute the old Town-Planning Authorities, so that they will have powers to take full advantage of the changed situation. The new authorities will have powers analogous to those of the Land Utilization Board. But it is probable that they will differ slightly, because the town which is envisaged as the centre of the educational, administrative and cultural life of the surrounding area, will be a much larger unit than any dealt with by the Land Utilization Board, and must be planned as a whole.

The Town-Planning Authorities will be responsible for the lay-out of their areas in the same way as the Land Utilization Board is responsible for the lay-out of the county. They will plan the road, locate the major parks and open spaces, and divide the land into reasonable-sized units, so that it may be developed by building companies. They will also have, however, the power of acting directly through the municipal

architect. It is felt that public buildings should be designed as a whole, and that the best way of securing this is to entrust the supervision of all public buildings to one man. By public buildings I mean, of course, theatres, cinemas, opera houses, municipal buildings, museums, picture galleries, assembly halls, and stations. Important shopping centres might also come under this category in certain instances.

I think I have said enough to make you realize the improvements that will be made possible by the new Act.

## *The National Trust*

DURING recent years the work of the National Trust has increased so much that its name is constantly before the public, yet very few people know exactly what it is or what it does. These brief notes try to give an outline of the Trust's achievements and its aims for the future.

The National Trust, in brief, is an organization constituted by Act of Parliament to hold property of beauty or historic interest and to preserve such property for the benefit of the public.

### *Constitution*

The National Trust was founded in 1895 by Miss Octavia Hill, Sir Robert Hunter, and Canon Rawnsley. By 1907 the Trust had established itself to such an extent as to justify its incorporation by a special Act of Parliament. This confirmed the Trust's work to be the promotion of permanent preservation for the benefit of the nation of lands and buildings of beauty or historic interest and, as regards lands, of their national aspect features and animal and plant life.

The National Trust is governed by a Council of fifty members, twenty-five of them being nominated by the learned bodies and kindred societies of the country and the remaining twenty-five being elected by its subscribers. Consequently the Trust is always certain to put first and foremost the preservation of the amenities of history and scenery.

### *Special Advantages*

The National Trust is the only national organization incorporated to hold land and buildings for the benefit of the nation. The Act gives it full control over its properties including power to make by-laws. In addition, various

concessions have been granted by Parliament. The National Trust does not pay Income-Tax and, generally speaking, its possessions are not rated. The Trust is officially designated a charity.

### *Relations with Other Societies*

The Trust, being primarily the holder of property, works in a different field from that of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England or of that for Wales, the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, and other bodies with whom the Trust works in close co-operation. The Trust has itself no local branches but looks to other societies for help in rousing local interest. Local Committees administer most of the properties and also help in this direction.

### *Funds*

Very many people suppose that the National Trust is financed by the State, but this is not so. The National Trust is independent of the Government and receives no grant from the Treasury. The funds for the purchase of properties must always be provided either by individual donors or else by means of a public appeal (other properties are, of course, presented). The cost of maintenance and management has to be met out of the income from the properties. The working expenses of the society are provided for almost entirely by the annual subscriptions of members. It will thus be seen that the Trust is supported entirely by voluntary contributions, so that there is an obvious need for maintaining and increasing the number of members.

### *Acquisitions by the National Trust*

The National Trust receives many offers of property either by gift or bequest as well as numerous proposals for saving particular houses or lands by purchase. It is the policy of the Trust for every scheme to be fully investigated before it is

considered by the Executive Committee. As a general rule this involves inspection by a member of the Head Office staff or some local representative. The Executive Committee then has to decide whether the property is a suitable one to be held for the nation and whether the financial aspect is such that acceptance can be undertaken without any serious liability on the general funds of the Trust.

In the case of gifts the National Trust is generally unwilling to agree to limiting conditions, although always prepared to try to meet the wishes of donors. In the case of suggested purchase the Committee are only very occasionally in the position to offer any funds except from private benefactors and it is customary to ask that first of all there shall be strong local backing for any particular project before the support of the National Trust can be given. Owing to the great number of places which are threatened every year the National Trust cannot itself launch public appeals except in a few of the cases taken up. The Trust in other cases lends its name to a local appeal and undertakes, if the money can be found, to accept the land and administer it in the future.

### *Bequests*

Bequests of land may be made to the Trust and are generally exempt from death duties and aggregation. Some of the finest properties of the Trust were acquired in this way.

Bequests of funds for the purchase of property would be of great value in enabling properties to be preserved where—as is often the case—a public appeal is impossible.

### *Management by the National Trust*

When a property has been acquired the National Trust's work only just begins. It is commonly supposed that to preserve a property must be a comparatively easy task, but the Trust, and more especially the Estates Committee, find that all sorts of problems arise and the Trust's responsibilities and difficulties are perhaps even greater than those of private

landowners. Examples of the problems which must be considered are the amount of access which can be allowed when land is leased to a tenant, the cutting down of old timber and making of new plantations, how to prevent downland from being covered with gorse or bracken and how to preserve the character of an ancient building without letting it fall into decay. There are also special problems in connection with nature reserves where regulations have to be imposed in order to safeguard birds, animals, insects, or plant life. It is the policy of the Trust to maintain farm lands efficiently and to see that buildings and fencing are satisfactory from a practical, as well as from an esthetic, standpoint.

The Estates Committee is responsible for the Trust's policy as regards all these questions, but in the case of large properties Local Committees are usually formed which act under the direction of the Estates Committee, and only refer matters of major importance to the Head Office. These Local Committees are entirely voluntary and are composed of local residents with sometimes a paid Secretary or Agent.

In connection with the buildings which it owns the National Trust is in constant touch with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings whose advice is always most readily given and the Ancient Monuments Department of the Office of Works also acts in friendly co-operation with the Trust. A considerable number of the Trust's possessions are scheduled as ancient monuments and the management of one or two has been actually taken over by the Office of Works.

### *Properties*

During the forty years of its existence the National Trust has come into possession of nearly 300 properties totalling over 50,000 acres. These are of immense variety and include mountains and moors, woods and small view-points, lakes, and river banks, and great stretches of cliffland round our coasts.

The first property was Dinas Oleau, five acres at Barmouth, presented by Mrs. Fanny Talbot in 1895. The second was the Old Clergy House at Alfriston, bought and repaired by



public subscription in 1896. The properties include large areas of common land and two properties held on lease for 500 years. These two are the Holnicote Estate of some 6,000 acres on Exmoor and the Ennerdale Estate of 3,350 acres in the Cumberland Fells.

Other very large properties are the Fell and Rock Climbing Club Memorial (3,000 acres), the Sugar Loaf, Abergavenny (2,130 acres), and the Ashridge Estate, near Berkhamsted (2,500 acres). The largest group of properties are in the Lake District, and include Friar's Crag and much of the shores of Derwentwater, Cow-barrow Fell on Ullswater, Tarn Hows near Hawkshead. The Trust is also the owner of the Farne Islands off the Northumberland coast, Scarth Wood Moor in the North Riding of Yorkshire, Longshaw Moor (over 1,000 acres) near Sheffield, approximately 700 acres in Dovedale, two famous bird sanctuaries on the Norfolk coast, Box Hill, Leith Hill, and a series of properties at Hindhead, Surrey, and several holdings in the region of the South Downs. In the West Country the Trust has numerous properties in Somerset and important areas of coastline on the north and south coasts of Devon and Cornwall, including land at Salcombe, Polperro, Fowey, Land's End, Tintagel, Clovelly, and Mortehoe. In Wales the National Trust has had few possessions until recent years, but now owns two places near Snowdon, 1,100 acres near Tyn-y-Groes, and clifflands in Pembrokeshire and Gower.

The National Trust has no property in Scotland as there is a special National Trust for Scotland formed a few years ago and working on exactly similar lines.

Among the places of historic interest held by the National Trust are Housesteads Camp on the Roman Wall; Treasurer's House at York; East Riddlesden Hall, Keighley; Aberconwy, which is believed to be the oldest house in Conway; Tattershall Castle, a great brick keep in Lincolnshire; Lyveden New Building; and Barrington Court and Montacute House, two great mansions in Somerset. Amongst small buildings owned by the Trust are the Priest's House at Muchelney, the City Mill in Winchester, Shalford Mill near Guildford and

Newtown Old Town Hall in the Isle of Wight. Finally, the National Trust is the owner of Bodiam Castle—one of its proudest possessions and one of the most famous moated buildings in the country. This was a bequest from the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston.

The Trust has also been able by means of covenants and the holding of land carrying common rights to protect in varying degrees some 15,000 acres.

### *Membership*

Any person may become a member of the National Trust by paying an annual subscription of not less than 10s. Donors of more than £20 become Life Members. Donors of £100 become Honorary Members, and donors of £500 or property of equivalent value are called Benefactors. As the Trust is a charity, subscribers naturally do not expect to receive any considerable advantages beyond the satisfaction of helping in the work, but each member is given a card which entitles him to free admission to any Trust property where a charge is usually made and every year special meetings and visits are arranged to which members (and sometimes their friends) are invited. Members are also supplied with an Annual Report and Handbook of Properties and a Quarterly 'News.'

The address of the National Trust is 7 Buckingham Palace Gardens, Westminster, S.W.1.

## *The Council for the Preservation of Rural England*

THE Council for the Preservation of Rural England was formed in 1926, to co-ordinate the efforts of many national associations, institutions, and societies, each of which is interested in preserving rural scenery from some special danger or in protecting the artistic and historic features of country towns and villages. Needless to say the reasonable use and development of rural areas are encouraged; it is only abuse and bad development of such areas that it is sought to restrict. The council therefore aims both at safeguarding what is possible of amenity in the process of development, and at creating fresh amenity wherever development takes place.

The council now consists of forty-two constituent bodies of a national character, twenty-eight county branches and committees, a hundred and forty affiliated bodies, and an ever increasing individual associate membership.

### *The Need for Action*

Combined action is urgently needed if the incessant and growing attacks upon the amenities of the countryside are to be overcome. Day by day the press records fresh acts of disfigurement. Sometimes it is an historic building which has stood for centuries, a silent witness of the thoughts and ideals of the men who planned and built it, that is being destroyed to furnish a site for commercial premises; or it may be a more modest dwelling of real beauty, typical of all that is best of the domestic architecture of other days, that is demolished for the sake of the timber it contains. Ancient buildings are

constantly being converted into garages or petrol stations and rendered needlessly hideous by a medley of advertisements. Sometimes, too, the whole beauty of a village street is ruined by the destruction of old cottages to make room for modern structures, which by reason of design, situation, or materials, are completely out of harmony with their surroundings. Ancient stone bridges are disappearing to give place to new ones of iron or concrete of indifferent design; blocks of houses, whether provided by local authorities or private individuals, are frequently mean in design and execution, and are often grouped without the slightest regard for beautiful scenery or for the dignity of adjoining buildings; isolated bungalows are permitted to break the skyline or selfishly to ruin a wide and famous landscape which can rightly be regarded as a common possession of other owners in the neighbourhood and indeed of the whole community. Disfigurement, too, is often due to the unrestrained display of advertisements which are appearing in such increasing numbers as to mar the enjoyment of a walk or drive along numberless rural highways and by-ways. Commons are quarried, enclosed, or stripped of timber; the village green is allowed to become the dumping ground for household litter, hedgerow trees and farm timber are ruthlessly felled and great motor roads are driven over hill and dale without due consideration for rural scenery; while electricity pylons carelessly placed constitute but one further assault against which amenity has to defend itself. Even the sky has been threatened by the advertisers.

These are but typical examples of the many forms of unrestrained defacement that are destroying the spirit and beauty of the country districts and against which the C.P.R.E. wages unceasing war. So rapidly was the process of destruction proceeding that, single handed, none of the existing organizations could hope to cope with it. After mature consideration, therefore, those organizations came to the conclusion that the wave of disfigurement could only be arrested, or at least further retarded, if their forces were united.

The Council for the Preservation of Rural England provides

the national machinery for collective action, and has demonstrated its value on innumerable occasions during the past ten years.

### *The Council's Objects*

The Council for the Preservation of Rural England has placed before itself three main objects:

(1) To organize concerted action to secure the protection of rural scenery and of the amenities of country towns and villages from disfigurement or injury.

(2) To act either directly or through its members as a centre for furnishing or proclaiming advice and information upon any matters affecting the protection of such amenities.

(3) To arouse, form and educate public opinion in order to promote these objects.

The council neither supersedes nor overrides any of the bodies which have combined to form it. On the contrary, it is its aim to assist the whole of its constituent members by bringing to their aid in time of need the force and influence of every organization interested from different points of view in the protection of amenities. To attain this end the council is composed of representatives appointed by the associations and institutions themselves. The council acts as a clearing-house in respect of the complaints which reach it direct, and where combined action is called for in connection with any serious threat of disfigurement the necessary steps are taken to secure such action. The council is thus in touch with every phase of activity affecting the country.

### *Constructive Work*

It was not intended that the council should be merely a negative force. It is part of its policy to promote suitable and harmonious development and to encourage the national enjoyment of rural areas by urban dwellers; it has also from time to time promoted or supported reasonable legislation to give better protection to rural scenery; it has placed its services

at the disposal of Government departments, local authorities, landowners and others who have desired to have the advantage of the views and experience of its members; it has sought to create a network of amenity committees throughout the country and to assist and encourage the members of women's institutes and community councils and of other existing rural organizations, ratepayers associations, etc., to care for their local amenities and features of antiquarian or architectural interest. The council, too, watches town- and regional-planning schemes in order to encourage local authorities responsible for those schemes to get them planned on seemly and efficient lines, and to take the fullest advantage of their powers for the protection of amenities.

The council is officially represented on the Minister of Health's Advisory Committee on Town and Country Planning and on the Minister's Housing Advisory Committee by Professor Patrick Abercrombie and the president, Lord Crawford, respectively.

The council played a leading part in securing the introduction of the Rural Amenities Bill, the precursor of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1932 which confers on local authorities powers for the safeguarding of areas of national and local beauty, the preservation of rural and village life, and provides for the improvement of our great towns and cities. Also in securing the introduction of the Restriction of Ribbon Development Act, to which end the council worked in close co-operation with the Ministry of Transport, the County Councils Association, and the national bodies representing road traffic interests. For nearly ten years the council has been pressing for the treatment of main roads on a national basis, and now that at last the Trunk Roads Act has been passed, has set up a special committee to report on roadside amenities and the relation of the road to the landscape.

A very satisfactory and valuable liaison has been established with His Majesty's Office of Works. The survey of roadside monuments prepared with the assistance of the County Surveyors and the Automobile Association is now being

examined by the officials. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has noted with sympathy and approval the working arrangement which has been established between the Catchment Board Association and the C.P.R.E. with the object of securing the protection of riverside and waterway amenities. A Joint Committee of the Forestry Commission and the C.P.R.E. has been set up to consider the problem arising out of the work of the commission in relating forestry to the landscape. The work of this committee has already proved of outstanding importance and led to the safeguarding from large-scale afforestation of the heart of the Lake District.

The council has supplied reports, by request, to the Ordnance Survey Department and the Ordnance Survey Maps Committee.

The Central Electricity Board continue to consult the council with regard to the siting of the grid in places like the Lake District, and similar consultation is taking place between county branches and the local electricity undertakers. Co-operation between the Engineering Department of the G.P.O. and the C.P.R.E. established by the Postmaster-General three years ago continues successfully and is being extended. Contact has been established with the Officers of the Commissioners of Crown Lands with most satisfactory results, and at the suggestion of the Ministry of Health important meetings have taken place between representatives of the British Water Works Association and the C.P.R.E. on the subject of access to water catchment areas.

Information has been supplied to the Board of Education about the design of school buildings and the importance of rendering all possible support to the teaching profession in their efforts to teach the appreciation of beauty in schools. By the courtesy of the Air Ministry, the council's architects and representatives have been permitted to inspect and offer observation upon the design of buildings, layouts, etc. The council's representations to the Defence Departments have always received most sympathetic consideration.

Advisory panels in conjunction with the R.I.B.A. and the

Institute of Builders have been formed all over the country to give free advice to those who require it under the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts and to assist with town- and country-planning schemes. These panels have the support of the Ministry of Health.

The council's surveys of the Thames Valley, Devon, and Cornwall are models of their kind.

In the matter of education the council has exhibitions of photographs which have visited more than 300 towns and villages and are invaluable as a means of bringing home to the public the many problems with which the council is confronted. Lectures, and lantern slides which are loaned free of charge, form another means of propaganda.

Indeed the council's activities are so diverse and so far-reaching that it is impossible to enumerate them all in a survey of this kind.

### *The Council's Needs*

To carry out its object it has been necessary for the council to set up adequate machinery; secretarial and clerical assistance must be employed, printing, postage, travelling, lecturing and general office expense must be met and the council's usefulness to the community must depend upon the financial support it receives. £5,000 a year is needed as a minimum. The Carnegie trustees have very kindly supported the council during its initial stages, but the grant expires in 1938 when a serious deficiency in annual income will result unless it can be provided for meanwhile. The constituent bodies contribute in accordance with their means but most of them are not in a position to afford more than nominal financial aid. For this reason it was decided to enrol private individuals as associate or life members of the council, and an earnest appeal is made to all who realize the pressing importance of the work to assist the council to attain its objects. An ancient building once destroyed is lost for ever; a beautiful view, though a national asset, may be irretrievably marred by unwise development.



Such things are happening every day and will continue to happen unless and until men and women will realize the value of the historic associations and natural beauty of their Homeland, and see to it that whatever can be done *shall* be done to arrest the process of disfigurement.

It is therefore with increasing confidence that the Council for the Preservation of Rural England appeals for the practical support of all who sympathize with its aims.

The following are the conditions of membership:

Individual associate membership £1 1s. per annum.

Affiliated societies £1 1s. per annum.

Donations of £25 and over entitle the donor to life membership.

The council is supported by voluntary subscriptions, and the hon. secretary will gratefully receive contributions of any amount, if sent to him at 4 Hobart Place, London, S.W.1.

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NOTE.—The Council for the Preservation of Rural Wales, a younger sister of the C.P.R.E., with similar aims, has its headquarters at the same address.



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